

1996 FEBRUARY 3

**SATURDAY**

The real cost  
of eating out  
What's behind your bill  
In the Magazine

Win a Porsche Boxster  
See Weekend page 19  
for token and entry form

The cradle of  
popular culture  
Malcolm Bradbury on New York  
Weekend page 9



# THE INDEPENDENT

No 2,900

3 FEBRUARY 1996 (IR 65p) 50p

## Tories 'backing Sky' on TV sport

Lords fury as Bottomley paper  
favours satellite channel

DONALD MACINTYRE and  
MARIANNE MACDONALD

The Government was last night threatened with an embarrassing Lords defeat for its Broadcasting Bill amid claims that Virginia Bottomley, the Secretary of State for National Heritage, backed Sky TV's right to poach flagship sports events from the BBC.

Furious peers accused her of "panic" and attempting to bypass the Upper House, with a document that they believed dwelt disproportionately on the potential financial advantages to sport of exclusive deals with Sky.

Faced with mounting parliamentary pressure to change the law to ensure viewers without cable and satellite can continue to enjoy the main national sporting occasions, Mrs Bot-

tomley's discussion paper warned against "ill thought-out" changes designed to exclude Sky from exclusive access to premier sporting events. It would be "folly to do so" without "proper consideration," the paper said.

Labour peers were last night optimistic of attracting enough cross-bench and dissident Tory support to stand a good chance of forcing through amendments guaranteeing continued access for the BBC and ITV.

Despite the tone of the document, some senior Tories remain convinced that John Major and Mrs Bottomley are resigned to conceding a five-year ban on Sky from exclusive coverage of the main events, but their tactic is to wait until the Bill reaches the Commons after Easter to leave MPs as little room as possible for seeking even more drastic changes.

But ministerial hopes of avoiding the issue coming to a head in the Lords on Tuesday appeared to be receding last night amid signs of anger on the

cross-benches and among some Tories over Mrs Bottomley's tactic in publishing the discussion paper.

Lord Peyton, a former Tory Cabinet minister, said Mrs Bottomley's move "makes me more likely to vote for the [opposition] amendment". He added: "It is a rather dubious manoeuvre late in the day."

It is understood that both the BBC and Sky, represented by its chief executive Sam Chisholm, met officials at 10 Downing Street last week to discuss a range of broadcasting issues, including sport on television.

Mr Chisholm refused to comment directly on the talks, but said: "Out of the current political process, sport must be the winner. Sky's position all the way through has been that we are backing sport."

Mrs Bottomley threw down the gauntlet in a statement that warned: "To make changes without proper consideration of the implications would be folly. It is easy for anyone to dream up a wish-list of favourite events which should be on free-to-air television."

"But the Crown Jewels of British sport could quickly become devalued if sport does not have the money to reinvest in the superstars of tomorrow."

She spoke out days before the Lords begin detailed scrutiny of the Broadcasting Bill. Labour, backed by a cross-party coalition of peers, has tabled a series of hostile amendments.

The Opposition, supported by the BBC and ITV, wants the Government to ban subscription TV services - such as Rupert Murdoch's Sky Sports channel - from acquiring rights to the eight "listed" events.

These are the Derby, the Grand National, the Olympics, Wimbledon, the FA Cup Final, the Scottish FA Cup Final, cricket Test matches involving England, and the World Cup.

These cannot be shown exclusively on pay-per-view television. Crucially, however, restrictions under the 1990 Broadcasting Act do not exclude subscription channels such as Sky Sports, which has been able to outbid the ITV and BBC for numerous events.

The paper claims satellite and cable services have quadrupled the amount of sport shown on TV to 12,000 hours since 1988 and says the income from television rights has hugely helped investment in sports.

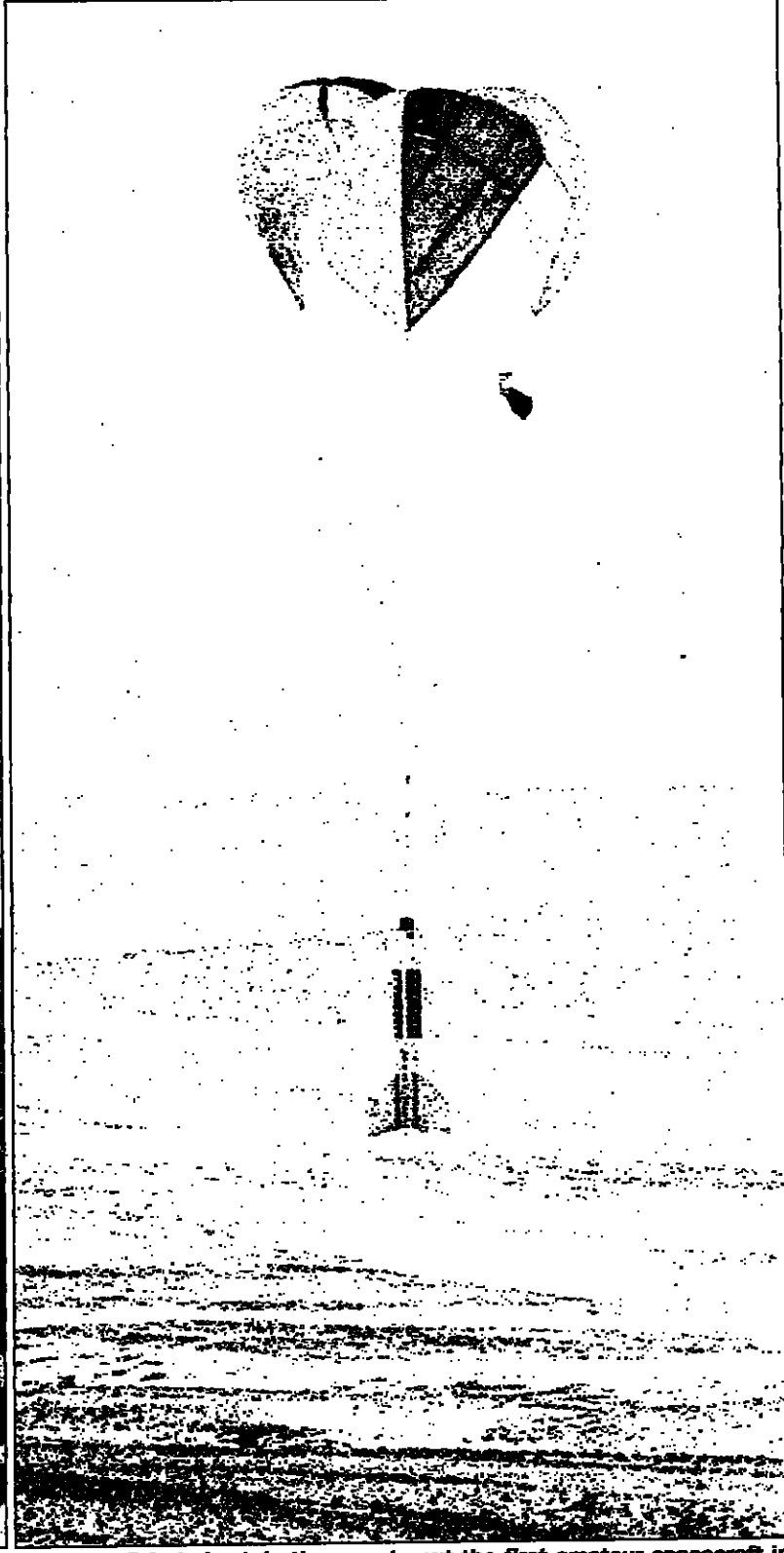
The BBC is understood to be furious about the discussion document, which appears to draw heavily on BSkyB data.

Leading article, page 12

## A small step for mankind ... a giant leap for Steve Bennett, toothpaste technician



Reach for the skies: *Starchaser II*, powered by sugar and weedkiller, yesterday put Britain back in the race to put the first amateur spacecraft in orbit. Steve Bennett, a toothpaste laboratory technician from Dukinfield, Manchester, proudly watched his home-made rocket shoot 1,890 feet into the air (left) before splashdown. To reach orbit, a rocket must travel 50 miles upwards, 140 times further than *Starchaser*. Photographs: Raoul Dixon



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The big problem with Ray Illingworth

When Hitler met Mussolini

Galliano - the effect was shattering

Which side to be on in the mortgage war

starting in the Independent on Sunday tomorrow

## Ashdown targeted in racist hate campaign

MICHAEL PRESTAGE and DONALD MACINTYRE

Police believe a firebomb attack early yesterday on the car of Paddy Ashdown was part of a hate campaign against the Liberal Democrat leader by local criminals in Yeovil.

The arson attack - in which his car was burnt out, but no one was injured - was believed to be linked to his high-profile campaign against a spate of racist attacks in the town.

A neighbour spotted the blaze in a lean-to at the side of Mr Ashdown's cottage in the village of Norton sub Hamdon, near Yeovil, Somerset, in the early hours of yesterday and

called the fire brigade. Mr Ashdown was at home at the time.

Police revealed that Mr Ashdown had received a telephone call on 1 December in which threats were made against his property. Other threats, which included a specific warning that his car would be burned, were received at his London office. On 18 January a stone was thrown through the window of Mr Ashdown's Vauxhall Senator car. After the threats police tightened up security measures, but these were relaxed after a few weeks. Following the latest arson attack Mr Ashdown will meet senior officers to discuss security.

Mr Ashdown was saying little about the incident yesterday

and carried out his usual round of constituency work. He said: "This is a matter exclusive to the police and the courts. I don't much like being woken up at 4am."

Superintendent Ted Allen said the arson attack on Mr Ashdown was also being linked with the fire bombing of a take-away and an arson at the offices of the *Western Gazette* newspaper in Yeovil, where £100,000 of damage was caused.

He said two men had been stopped by a routine patrol hours before the fire at Mr Ashdown's home because they were acting suspiciously. Supt Allen described the attack as a "despicable act".

Mr Ashdown has been stead-

fast in backing victims of racial attacks in the town where Turkish and Indian restaurant owners among his constituents have been subjected to violence. With a local parson, the Rev Mark Ellis, Mr Ashdown set up the Partnership Against Racism after a number of incidents in which the victims were reluctant to press charges because of alleged intimidation of witnesses.

Next Thursday, Mr Ashdown is due to give evidence in the committal for trial of Christopher Mason, who was arrested after an alleged knife attack on the MP as he went on a late night fact-finding mission into the problems of racist abuse in Yeovil.

Under siege, page 2

### IN BRIEF

#### Knife attacker jailed

A former mental patient who ran amok in a store, slashing 15 women's throats, was given 10 life sentences. Page 3

#### Gatwick jobs take off

Pressure for space at Heathrow will lead to the creation of 1,000 British Airways jobs at Gatwick this year. Page 2

#### Store wars heat up

Sainsbury's and Tesco stepped up the supermarket price war with new promotions. Page 5

#### Today's weather

Dry, cold, some sun. Page 2

## University chiefs stand firm on £300 levy

JUDITH JUDD  
Education Editor

University vice-chancellors yesterday refused to back down from their threat to impose a £300 entrance levy on students from September next year.

A meeting in London of the 104 vice-chancellors agreed to ask all university governing bodies to consider the levy in the fight against spending cuts.

Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, has invited the vice-chancellors to talk next Tuesday in an attempt to defuse the crisis.

The Government is considering a major independent inquiry into university funding, as well as publication of a consultative paper.

Vice-chancellors say they want evidence of the Government's willingness to make changes in the way higher education is funded, before they will lift their threat. Some of the most prestigious universities may go further and introduce top-up fees, which could be as high as £1,000.

Vice-chancellors want a scheme under which graduates would take out loans for both

living costs and teaching which would be repaid after they left university. At present, the taxpayer funds tuition fees, and loans are available only for maintenance.

Professor Martin Harris, Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University, said: "If no appropriate funding arrangement is put in place, a substantial number of universities will be driven to go to income sources derived from students."

David Melville, Vice-Chancellor of Middlesex University, said: "Unless there is some kind of movement I shall be recommending a levy."

A spokeswoman for the Department for Education and Employment said: "The taxpayer is currently paying more than £7bn a year of public money to support higher education, including grants and loans."

"The Government does not accept the reasons given for the committee of vice-chancellors' campaign."

John Akker, general secretary of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education, said: "I would urge institutions not to adopt 'go it alone' policies such as top-up

fees. Decent funding is a government responsibility."

Tony Blair is shortly expected to commit the Labour Party to a revamped student loan system, under which graduates would have to contribute to the cost of their higher education if they earned a good income in later life.

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## INDEPENDENT

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## IN BRIEF

## Terrorist chief's funeral goes ahead

Police chiefs and organisers of the delayed funeral of a terrorist chief agreed a peace deal in Belfast which allowed the ceremony to go ahead yesterday, a day late. Police believe the IRA leader Gino Gallagher, 32, who was shot dead last Tuesday, was the victim of an internal feud.

The IRA was last night blamed for a rifle attack on the home of an off-duty Royal Ulster Constabulary reservist in which 37 shots were fired, although the RUC officially refused to comment on who was responsible for the attack near Moy, Co Tyrone. The officer and his wife escaped unhurt.

## Chemical firm fined

Chemical company Associated Octel was fined £150,000 with £142,000 costs by Chester Crown Court after admitting two Health and Safety Act offences following a huge fire at its plant at Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, in February 1994.

## 'Heroic' PC's inquest

Constable George Hammond died as a result of massive stab wounds inflicted 11 years ago when he was trying to arrest a teenage robber who had a "gladiator-like" knife, an inquest in Southwark was told. PC Hammond, 58, of Forest Hill, south-east London, died on 13 December, never having recovered from the 1985 attack.

## Jail attack verdict

A man was cleared at the Old Bailey of raping a woman, 32, who was visiting him at Wormwood Scrubs prison in November 1994 while he was serving a life sentence for stabbing to death a girlfriend. Nicholas Fryers, 28, who cut the woman's throat with a razor blade when prison officers tried to overpower him, was jailed for four years for unlawful wounding.

## No hasty changes

The Isle of Wight has just had its first escalator installed, in British Homes Stores in Newport. The moving staircase was first exhibited in Paris in 1900.

## Bishop of Southwark

The Bishop of Southwark has asked us to point out that he resigned voluntarily from the post of President of the Church Pastoral Aid Society last year, and was not expelled.

## THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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 Germany ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
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 Hong Kong ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
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 Japan ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
 Korea ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
 Luxembourg ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
 Netherlands ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
 Norway ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
 Portugal ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
 Spain ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
 Sweden ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
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 Taiwan ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
 Thailand ... £1.14 ... £3.00  
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## BACK ISSUES

Back issues of the Independent are available from Historic Newspapers, telephone 0988 400255.

## Scotland learns from epic lost to Ireland

Scotland's film industry was revitalised by Mel Gibson's decision to film much of his epic *Braveheart* about Scots hero William Wallace ... in Ireland, Scottish arts minister Lord Lindsay said yesterday.

It had forced the Scots to think again about how to woo film-makers.

The minister was speaking at a news conference in Edinburgh to announce £1.9m from National Lottery funds for the Scottish film industry and on the eve of the premiere of the Hollywood film *Lock Ness* in Inverness. He played down the importance of tax benefits which were available to film-makers by going to Ireland.

Lord Lindsay said Gibson had told him and Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, that the film team spent more on the transport costs between Scotland and Ireland for the whole crew than they received from the tax break of having relocated there.

Ireland had won by offering a whole basket of measures, including use of the Irish army as extras in battle scenes, he said. It was this attitude which was now being adopted in Scotland.

"We in Scotland, I think, have learnt a lot from the fact that *Braveheart* moved to Ireland. In a sense it is because *Braveheart* moved to Ireland that we now have a film industry in Scotland which is a lot more ambitious than had *Braveheart* not gone to Ireland."

"It flagged up to us what is so important and it is the general perception of the country as having a minister who is really involved and wants to go out and get film-makers and keep film-makers."

He added: "The lesson learned from that episode is we must make every effort with anyone who is planning to make a film in Scotland to persuade them that this is the place to make it. Since then we have invited film-makers here. We are offering a much more co-ordinated initiative in terms of making arrangements for people who are thinking of Scotland as a location for them."

## Ashdown attack: Gangs of 'Paki-bashing' drunks bring violence to tranquil Somerset town



## Restaurant staff under siege from racist thugs

MICHAEL PRESTAGE

The intervention of Paddy Ashdown into claims of widespread abuse of the small ethnic minority community in the Somerset market town of Yeovil brought a national spotlight to a problem that had been simmering for months.

The owners of the nine restaurants and takeaways at the bottom of Middle Street - a stone's throw from the Liberal Democrat leader's constituency headquarters - had long complained about a concerted campaign against them by a group of thugs.

There has been racist abuse, broken windows, violence and intimidation. Workers in the Indian restaurants complain of being afraid to go out because of victimisation. Some restaurants claim to be virtually under siege. The fire bombing of a kebab shop showed the extent to which those involved would go. The offices of the *Western Gazette* newspaper were also attacked. It had run articles critical of what was happening in Middle Street.

There are claims that those involved are skilled in getting others to set fires while ensuring a cast iron alibi for themselves. Police would not comment on those claims, but privately admit that getting evidence against known gang members is proving difficult.

Mr Ashdown is on record as saying that he knows the names of a small number of recidivists, perhaps 10 to 12 in number. They are in their mid-thirties and the MP put on record his determination to stop what was happening in Yeovil.

"Late night vandalism has unfortunately become the norm in town centre across the country," he said. "I am concerned because it is happening here in an extreme fashion."



Country life: Paddy Ashdown meets reporters yesterday after the attack on his car (above left) Photograph: Tim Cuff

"My clear view, backed by all that I have learnt, is that this is not political in the sense that the BNP is behind it. And I don't want it to come to that. It's an extension of the vandalism. Those who have had a skinful of beer or cider think that in addition to breaking plate-glass windows, it would be a useful extension to do a bit of 'Paki-bashing' as well."

Superintendent Ted Allen, head of the Yeovil sub-division, said there was an ongoing programme to clean up the Middle Street area and protect the restaurant owners and their staff. But he admitted that since

an attack on Mr Ashdown in November problems with public order and damage were still occurring in the area.

"This is something I am concerned about and I want to ensure that Yeovil is a safe place where people come out at night and enjoy themselves. I view it very much as local disorder, caused by local people with no long-term aims and fuelled by drink," he said.

To combat the problem Mr Ashdown had joined with community leaders to launch Partnerships Against Racial Harassment to alert the wider community to their problems.

being experienced and to show the ethnic minority community that they are not on their own.

Yeovil has a population of 40,000. Ethnic groups make up half of one per cent, almost the lowest rate in the country. Anthea Fisher, a worker with the Somerset Racial Equality Network, believes this lack of a history of ethnic minorities has led to those who do arrive being treated in a prejudiced way through lack of knowledge.

"There is an element that has been causing harassment for some time and the people subjected to it are too scared to come forward," she said.

## BA expansion creates 1,000 new jobs for Gatwick

Peter Rodgers Business Editor

Intense pressure for space at Heathrow will lead to the creation of nearly 1,000 British Airways jobs at Gatwick this year. The company said it was the biggest expansion of the airport in ten years.

BA is to recruit 700 cabin staff, 70 pilots and 200 customer service and cargo staff. This was a result of transferring 11 central and East African services to Gatwick from Heathrow and stepping up services to Nairobi, Entebbe and West Africa.

The company said the jobs were new and did not represent transfers from Heathrow, where there would be no cutback in staff numbers.

The airline already employs nearly 7,000 in the Gatwick area. Sir Colin Marshall, the chairman, said the expansion plan was based on the success of the North terminal.

He promised local residents he would introduce quieter aircraft, including Boeing 747-400s in 1997 and eventually "one of the quietest aircraft of them all, the Boeing 777."

Sir Colin said Heathrow was the most important international airport in the world, and would remain that way if there was a go ahead for Terminal 5 - a controversial project now subject to a public inquiry.

BA said it was planning to expand at both airports, though both currently had constraints on their capacity and the problem at Heathrow was worse than at Gatwick.

The plan was to use the space vacated there by the East African services to introduce more frequent services or larger aircraft to other destinations. Heathrow is the main base for Jumbos.

BA said that with its partner airlines it would be operating almost 900 scheduled flights a week to 90 destinations from Gatwick by the summer. The new routes will boost BA's fleet of long-haul aircraft operating out of Gatwick to 24 this summer, compared with 13 last year.

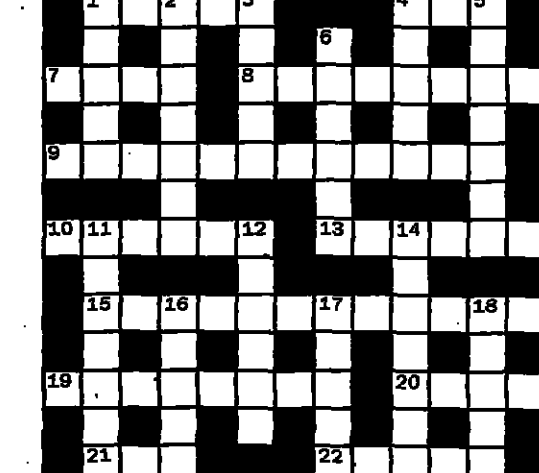
## BA is also putting its own aircraft on to US routes from Gatwick to Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Charlotte, which were until recently operated on BA's behalf by USAir.

Third quarter profits at BA to be announced on Monday are expected to be buoyed by strong worldwide demand for air travel and no sign of any serious fare wars.

3,000 jobs face axe. Page 17

## concise crossword

No. 2980 Saturday 3 February



- ACROSS**
- Cessation of hostilities (5)
  - Be in debt (3)
  - Weathercock (4)
  - Admirer (8)
  - Town of a crooked spine (12)
  - Horse handler (6)
  - From an Italian region (6)
  - Sticky quality (12)
  - Sligh pullers (8)
  - Satellite (4)
  - Blue vault (3)
  - Logic (5)
- DOWN**
- Educate (5)
  - Tool (7)
  - Raise spirits of (5)
  - Give a speech (5)
  - Introductory parts (7)
  - Equipment, clothing (6)
  - American religious sect (7)
  - More hopeful (6)
  - Sleep inducer? (7)
  - Darling (5)
  - Disease carrier (5)
  - Fume (5)

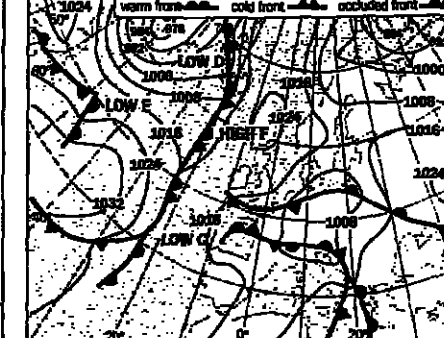
**Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:**

Across: 1. Blew, 3. Squaling (Bluestocking), 9. Slant, 10. Vicioli, 11. Lab, 13. Herringbone, 14. Modest, 16. Legion, 18. Laiterie, 20. Nix, 22. Intense, 23. Voter, 25. Generale, 26. Open. Down: 1. Basil, 2. Elm, 4. Tavern, 5. Laiterie, 6. Milition, 7. Galileo, 8. Elchi, 12. Badmintoon, 14. Milking, 15. Seminar, 17. Street, 19. Viva, 21. Baron, 24. Tip.

## Notes

## Weather forecast

NOON FORECAST



High F will head slowly eastwards, while Low C fits up. Low B is slow-moving and Low E will deepen northwards.

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
London	12	SW	100	0.0
Birmingham	11	SW	100	0.0
Manchester	10	SW	100	0.0
Newcastle	9	SW	100	0.0
Glasgow	8	SW	100	0.0
Doncaster	7	SW	100	0.0
Cardiff	6	SW	100	0.0
Edinburgh	5	SW	100	0.0
Belfast	4	SW	100	0.0
London	12	SW	100	0.0
Birmingham	11	SW	100	0.0
Manchester	10	SW	100	0.0
Newcastle	9	SW	100	0.0
Glasgow	8	SW	100	0.0
Doncaster	7	SW	100	0.0
Cardiff	6	SW	100	0.0
Edinburgh	5	SW	100	0.0
Belfast	4	SW	100	0.0

## LIGHTING UP TIMES

Location	Lighting Up	Darkening
London	4:52 pm	7:35 pm
Birmingham	4:52 pm	7:45 pm
Manchester	4:54 pm	7:50 pm
Newcastle	4:46 pm	7:53 pm
Glasgow	4:33 pm	8:07 pm
Doncaster	4:33 pm	8:07 pm
Cardiff	4:33 pm	8:07 pm
Edinburgh	4:33 pm	8:07 pm
Belfast	4:33 pm	8:07 pm

## HIGH TIDES

Location	High Tide
London Bridge	12:55 am
Ureport	10:38 am
Amersham	6:20 am
Hull (Albert Dock)	5:30 am
Gosforth	12:55 am
Doncaster	12:55 am

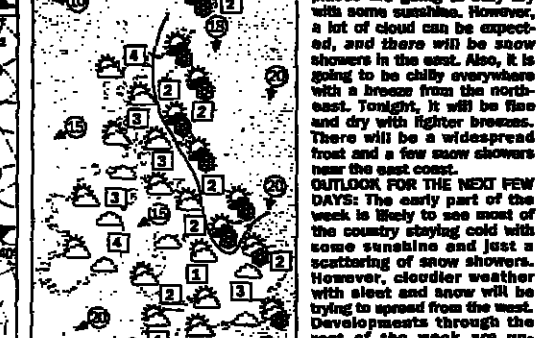
## Out and about with AA Roadwatch

Call 0336 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news.

Sources: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 30p per min (cheap rates 40p per min) plus other taxes and VAT.

## Independent Weatherline

FORECAST FOR TODAY: Many places are going to stay dry with some sunbursts. However, a lot of cloud can be expected, and there will be snow showers in the east. Also, it is going to be chilly everywhere with a breeze from the north-west. Tonight, it will be fine and dry with lighter showers. There will be a widespread frost and a few snow showers over the east coast.



OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS: The early part of the week is likely to see most of the country staying cold with some sunbursts and just a scattering of snow showers. However, cloudier weather with rain and snow will be trying to spread from the west. Developments through the rest of the week are uncertain, but it looks like becoming increasingly unsettled and windier.

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
London	12	SW	100	0.0
Birmingham	11	SW	100	0.0
Manchester	10	SW	100	0.0
Newcastle	9	SW	100	0.0
Glasgow	8	SW	100	0.0
Doncaster	7	SW	100	0.0
Cardiff	6	SW	100	0.0
Edinburgh	5	SW	100	0.0
Belfast	4	SW	100	0.0
London	12	SW	100	0.0
Birmingham	11	SW	100	0.0
Manchester	10	SW	100	0.0
Newcastle	9	SW	100	0.0
Glasgow	8	SW	100	0.0
Doncaster	7	SW	100	0.0
Cardiff	6	SW	100	0.0
Edinburgh	5	SW	100	0.0
Belfast	4	SW	100	0.0

## AIR QUALITY

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
London	12	SW	100	0.0
Birmingham	11	SW	100	0.0
Manchester	10	SW	100	0.0
Newcastle	9	SW	100	0.0
Glasgow	8	SW	100	0.0
Doncaster	7	SW	100	0.0
Cardiff	6	SW	100	0.0
Edinburgh	5	SW	100	0.0
Belfast	4	SW	100	0.0
London	12	SW	100	0.0
Birmingham	11	SW	100	0.0
Manchester	10	SW	100	0.0
Newcastle	9	SW	100	0.0
Glasgow	8	SW	100	0.0
Doncaster	7	SW	100	0.0
Cardiff	6	SW	100	0.0
Edinburgh	5	SW	100	0.0
Belfast	4	SW	100	0.0

## Independent Weatherline

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Sources: The Met Office.

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## POSTAL INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS CURRENT INTEREST RATES EFFECTIVE FROM 3 FEBRUARY 1996

	% Gross	% Net		% Gross	% Net
<b>POSTAL 120 (Annual)</b>			<b>POSTAL 7* (Annual)</b>		
£25,000 or more	7.20	5.40	£100,000 or more	5.25	3.94
£10,000 - £24,999	6.80	5.10	£50,000 - £99,999	5.00	3.81
£5,000 - £9,999	6.40	4.80	£25,000 - £49,999	5.10	3.83
£1,000 - £4,999	0.50	0.38	£10,000 - £24,999	4.25	3.19
<b>POSTAL 120 (Monthly)</b>			£25,000 - £49,999	3.85	2.89
£25,000 or more	6.97	5.23	£1,000 - £4,999	0.50	0.38
£10,000 - £24,999	6.60	4.95			
£5,000 - £9,999	6.24	4.38	<b>POSTAL 7* (Monthly)</b>		
£1,000 - £4,999	0.50	0.38	£100,000 or more	5.13	3.85
<b>POSTAL 90 (Annual)</b>			£50,000 - £99,999	5.08	3.81
£25,000 or more	6.10	4.58	£25,000 - £49,999	4.98	3.74
£10,000 - £24,999	6.00	4.30	£10,000 - £24,999	4.17	3.13
£5,000 - £9,999	5.70	4.28	£25,000 - £49,999	3.78	2.84
£1,000 - £4,999	0.50	0.38	£1,000 - £4,999	0.50	0.38
<b>POSTAL 60 (Monthly)</b>			<b>POSTAL ACCOUNT* (Annual)</b>		
£25,000 or more	5.94	4.46	Can now be operated through branch.		
£10,000 - £24,999	5.84	4.38	£50,000 or more	5.00	3.75
£5,000 - £9,999	5.54	4.36	£25,000 - £49,999	4.85	3.64
£1,000 - £4,999	0.50	0.38	£20,000 - £24,999	4.75	3.56
<b>POSTAL 30 (Monthly)</b>			£10,000 - £19,999	3.80	2.85
£25,000 or more	5.84	4.46	£2,000 - £9,999	3.55	2.66
£10,000 - £24,999	5.70	4.30	£500 - £1,999	3.00	2.25
£5,000 - £9,999	5.40	4.13	£1,000 - £499	0.50	0.38
£1,000 - £4,999	0.50	0.38			
<b>POSTAL 60 (Annual)</b>			<b>POSTAL ACCOUNT* (Monthly)</b>		
£25,000 or more	5.80	4.13	Can now be operated through branch.		
£10,000 - £24,999	5.35	4.01	£50,000 or more	4.89	3.67
£5,000 - £9,999	5.20	3.90	£25,000 - £49,999	4.75	3.56
£1,000 - £4,999	0.50	0.38	£20,000 - £24,999	4.65	3.49
<b>POSTAL 30 (Monthly)</b>			£10,000 - £19,999	3.74	2.81
£25,000 or more	5.37	4.03	£5,000 - £19,999	3.49	2.62
£10,000 - £24,999	5.08	3.81	£2,000 - £4,999	0.50	0.38
£5,000 - £9,999	4.82	3.68			
£1,000 - £4,999	0.50	0.38	<b>GO DIRECT*</b>		
			Can now be operated through branch.		
<b>POSTAL 30</b>			£50,000 or more	5.00	3.75
£50,000 or more	5.30	3.98	£25,000 - £49,999	4.85	3.64
£25,000 - £49,999	5.15	3.86	£20,000 - £24,999	4.75	3.56
£10,000 - £24,999	4.35	3.26	£10,000 - £19,999	3.80	2.81
£2,500 - £9,999	3.90	2.93	£500 - £1,999	3.55	2.66
£500 - £24,999	0.50	0.38	£500 - £1,999	3.00	2.25
			£1,000 - £499	0.50	0.38



IN BRIEF

**Prison chief's trial goes ahead**

Prison chiefs and members of the Home Office agreed a peace deal in which allowed the chief of the prison service to go ahead yesterday, a judge. Police believe the IRA is dead last Tuesday was an act of an internal feud. The IRA was last night for a rifle attack on the IRA of an off-duty Royal Ulster Constabulary reserve in 37 shots were fired, although the RUC officially refused to comment on what was possible for the attack near Co. Tyrone. The officer's wife escaped unhurt.

**Chemical firm fined**

A chemical company associated with the IRA was fined £2,000 by a Chester County Court after admitting a Health and Safety Act offence following a fire at a plant at Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, in February 1994.

**Heroic PC's inquest**

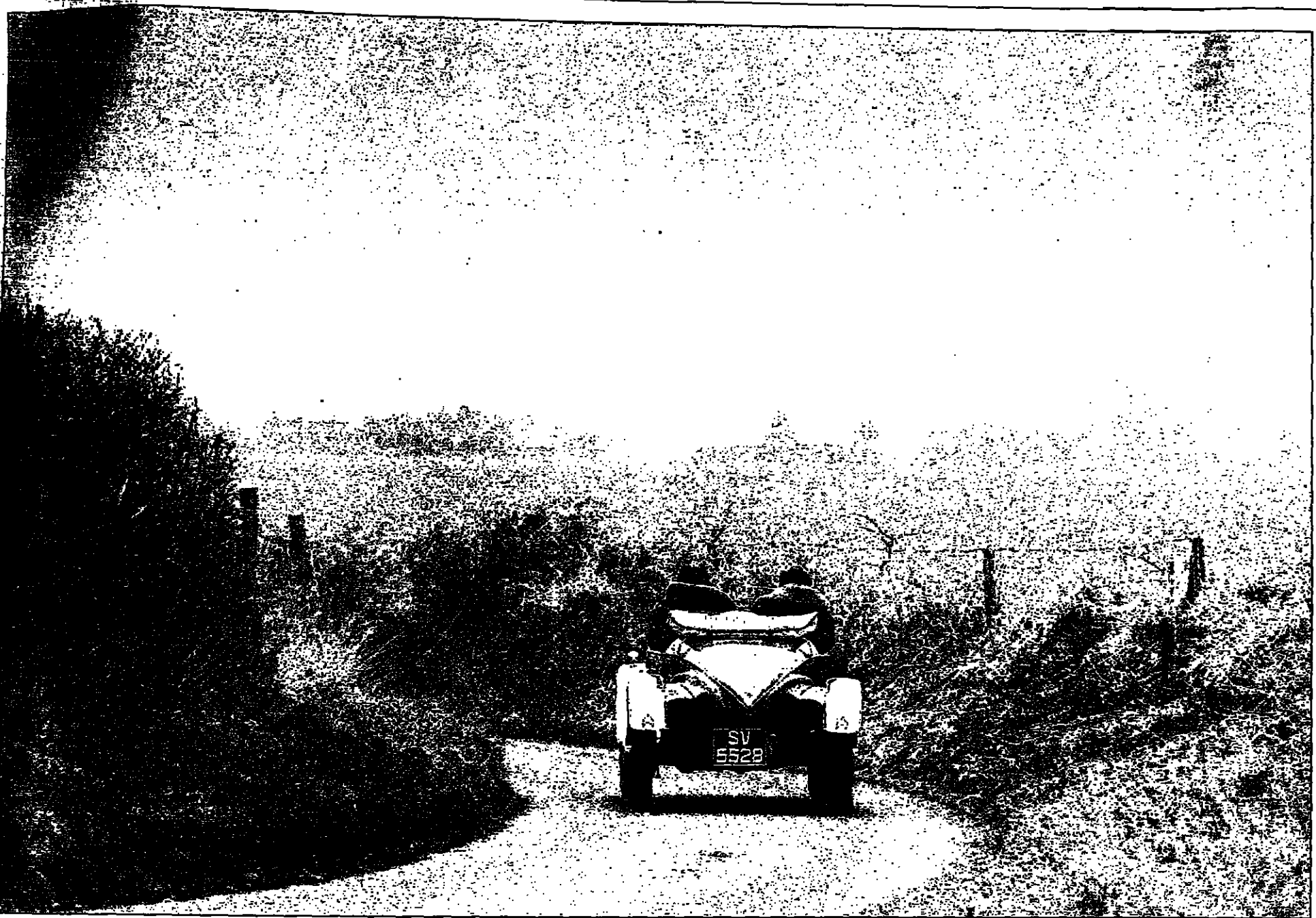
Apostolic George Hammond and his colleagues were praised for their bravery in a court of law yesterday after a fatal shooting in a south-west London road. Hammond, 38, and his colleagues were on duty on 13 October 1994 when they were shot at by a gunman. Hammond was killed and the other three were injured.

**Jail attack verdict**

A man who attacked a prison guard was sentenced to 12 months in jail yesterday after a trial at the Old Bailey. The man, 32, was charged with attacking a prison guard and causing him to be injured. The man was found guilty of the charge and sentenced to 12 months in jail.

**No hasty changes**

**Bishop of Southwark**



Open road: A 1922 AC Speedster makes its way to the start of the seventh Monte Carlo Challenge, for classic and vintage cars, in Bristol tomorrow Photograph: Edward Sykes

# 17 pupils held for supplying LSD at school

**PETER VICTOR**

Seventeen teenagers were arrested at a Worcestershire secondary school and three pupils have already been expelled after they were bailed, on suspicion of supplying LSD. Pupils aged 14 and 15 at King Charles I High School, Kidderminster, were caught taking the hallucinatory tablets in lessons.

The school has suspended seven more pupils while investigations into the alleged drugs ring continue. Twelve pupils, aged 14 or 15, have been formally cautioned by police for possessing the Class A drug.

Five others are on police bail. The five, all boys, include an unemployed 16-year-old from Kidderminster who is not a pupil at the school. He has been bailed in connection with supplying the drug.

The police swoop was prompted by teachers who were worried by the unusual behaviour of pupils in lessons, which the teachers suspected was drug related.

Inspector Andy Mackillop, of West Mercia Police, said: "The pupils weren't actually caught taking the drug. Basically there had been behavioural problems at the end of last term before Christmas and a number of pupils were excluded."

The local beat officer began investigating the circumstances surrounding this and when the new term began, the problems re-appeared. Following investigations, it was found that some of the pupils were taking LSD tablets in school. That was attributed to the behavioural problems that had been experienced.

"There were also a group of male pupils who had been involved in scuffles with those believed to be supplying the drug to girls in their class. It seems they were trying to protect them."

"Of those 12 youngsters cautioned the majority were girls, and they had one or two LSD tablets in their possession. Those who have been bailed will answer to that next week when a decision on whether to prosecute them will be made."

Mr Mackillop said the school had not had a drugs problem before. "There has never been anything to do with LSD," he said. "This came totally out of the blue."

"The school got the police involved at a very early stage and all the pupils' parents have been very supportive. The school has sent a clear message that they will not tolerate drugs of any description."

A spokesman for the school said: "Pupils guilty of supplying drugs will be expelled, and those who have bought and taken drugs will be excluded, until a decision has been made about their future."

# Knifeman gets 10 life terms for store attack

A former mental patient who ran amok in a department store, slashing 15 women's throats, was given 10 life sentences yesterday.

David Morgan, 31, of Aston, Birmingham, admitted nine offences of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and one of assault in connection with the attacks at Rackhams store in Birmingham city centre in December 1994.

He was sentenced amid a dispute between his defence lawyers and the National Health Service over whether he was still mentally ill. The judge at Birmingham Crown Court accepted the view of psychiatrists at Ashworth high security hospital that he was not, and sentenced him to prison.

The store was packed with hundreds of Christmas shoppers when Morgan launched his assault.



David Morgan: Dispute over whether he was mentally ill

The court was told yesterday that Morgan strode on to the ground floor of Rackhams after pushing and kicking two female shoppers outside.

Once in the cosmetics department he walked up to a counter and produced a knife, swiping at the neck of assistant Debbie Gilbert. She screamed and, realising her neck had been cut, ran off to the safety of a nearby staff office. As panic gripped the store, Morgan continued on his way, walking into the handbag department.

Alistair McCreath, QC, for the prosecution, said that Jan Twining, a customer, was browsing in the cards department. He took her by the shoulder, turned her head and brought the knife across her throat. He said something to the effect of: "There's another one."

Morgan's next victim was

handbag assistant Kay Pilkington. He slashed her throat, leaving a wound needing 12 stitches. Moving to the jewellery department he attacked two more women, chasing one around the store. One of his victims received surgery on a wound to her throat and doctors said the knife had nearly penetrated her windpipe.

Two female security officers who tried to help customers as the knifeman attacked them on the floor, both received injuries themselves as panic gripped the store and customers dived for cover behind counters.

After slashing 15 women, Morgan was finally accosted by police as he wandered around the first floor of the store.

Kevin Hart, a civilian scenes of crimes officer, and Sergeant Jim Lavery approached Morgan and ordered him to put down his weapon. As he did, both men, one armed with a golf club, rugby tackled him to the floor and he was later arrested.

Mr McCreath described the scene on the day. "Those who were present were terrified. Those who had been cut were bleeding copiously from their wounds and were in genuine fear for their lives. Others were in shock and so frightened that they had lost the power to walk."

Morgan also pleaded guilty to attacking a psychiatric nurse at Ashworth Hospital while on remand in December last year. He allegedly held a grudge against the nurse and managed to conceal a razor blade before walking up behind him and slashing him across the throat.

Sentencing him to 10 life sentences for the nine counts of wounding in Rackhams and the attack on the nurse, Mr Justice Igor Judge told him: "There can be no doubt that you are an extremely dangerous man. It is certain you must be detained until you cease to represent a risk to public safety - if that time never comes, so be it."

Morgan also received a two-year sentence for the count of assault and six charges of attempted murder were ordered to lie on file. The judge recommended that Morgan not be put forward for parole before serving 12 years in prison.

# Man who killed two partners gets life

A man who killed two women with whom he lived was yesterday sentenced to life imprisonment by a judge who told him she intended to recommend a "very substantial time" in custody.

Terrence Brown, 35, was convicted of the murder of Tina Doyle, 38, who was strangled and stabbed at the flat they

shared in Weymouth, Dorset. Doyle died on 26 February last year. After returning their verdict, the jury heard that on 26 February 1989 Brown had strangled his then partner, Mary Button.

Mr Nigel Pascoe, QC, prosecuting, said on 9 November that year Brown was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. In 1992 the conviction was quashed. A verdict of manslaughter was substituted and he received a sentence of eight years. He had been in custody since his arrest and he was released in July 1993.

Mr Pascoe said the conviction was quashed because during the trial it became clear there was a distant relationship between

a juror and a police officer which should have been investigated at the time.

The verdict that Brown was guilty of Tina Doyle's murder was greeted with a shout of "yes!" from his first victim's relatives in the public gallery at Winchester Crown Court. Her sister, Janice Olwyn, mouthed "Thank you" at the jury.

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# Health chief insists that system was not at fault

David Morgan was not another Christopher Clunis, nor were the horrific scenes in Rackhams a failure of the mental health services, NHS managers and psychiatrists insisted yesterday.

Their vigorous defence came despite Morgan having a history of schizophrenia and psychosis and despite Adrian Fulford, QC, his defence lawyer, telling the court that if Morgan had been given anti-depressants during a visit to his GP two months before the attack, "there is a real chance these offences would not have occurred."

After a normal childhood, Morgan, who became a loner with a grudge against women, was admitted in 1988 to All Saints Hospital, Birmingham, aged 23, following his father's death. The stress led to a diagnosis of schizophrenia, hypomania and depressive psychosis. But after treatment he was discharged, and while he had undoubtedly been mentally ill six years ago, he had then made "a complete recovery," John Mahoney, chief executive of the

## Diagnosing mental illness is an inexact science. Nicholas Timmins reports

Northern Birmingham Mental Health Trust, said yesterday. He added that 50 per cent of people with mental illness recover completely and remain symptom-free.

Mr Fulford told the court: "It appears from the records that effectively there was no follow-up at all" - a view rejected by the trust.

In 1992 and 1993, Morgan was conditionally discharged after attacking women in the street, but the psychiatric services had no further contact with him until September 1994 when he visited his GP, complaining of difficulty obtaining benefits.

Mr Mahoney said the GP referred him to a community psychiatric nurse who arranged for a consultant psychiatrist to examine him after he spoke of aggressive thoughts towards

women. It was judged, however, that he was not mentally ill, a view that Mr Mahoney said had been upheld by psychiatrists at Ashworth special hospital - where Morgan has spent the last nine months - and backed by the judge.

"Numerous psychiatrists who have seen him before and after these attacks could find no evidence of mental illness or a recurrence of his earlier symptoms. We can only stand by our original conclusion that there were no grounds to treat David Morgan, compulsorily or not, and that he is not suffering from mental illness," Mr Mahoney said. While the trust extended its sincere sympathy to Morgan's victims, he said "the mental health services cannot be held accountable."

Having aggressive thoughts and attitudes did not necessarily mean individuals were mentally ill, Mr Mahoney said. Morgan had not been suffering from delusions, anxieties, phobias, hearing voices, or displaying other signs of mental illness.

# Jail for the pigeon lady of Penge

**JOHN MCKIE**

A pensioner who repeatedly broke a court order by feeding pigeons near her home was sentenced to 56 days' imprisonment by a judge yesterday.

Jean Knowlson, 68, had irritated her neighbours by feeding pigeons near her home in Penge, Croydon, south London, leading to complaints over the pigeons, rats and environmental decay since 1989.

Last July she served four days of a 28-day jail sentence

before being released. She re-offended, leading to another High Court appearance last December, where she apologised and promised to stop distributing bread. She broke the promise, which led Croydon Council to bring yesterday's case, the fourth attempt to stop her.

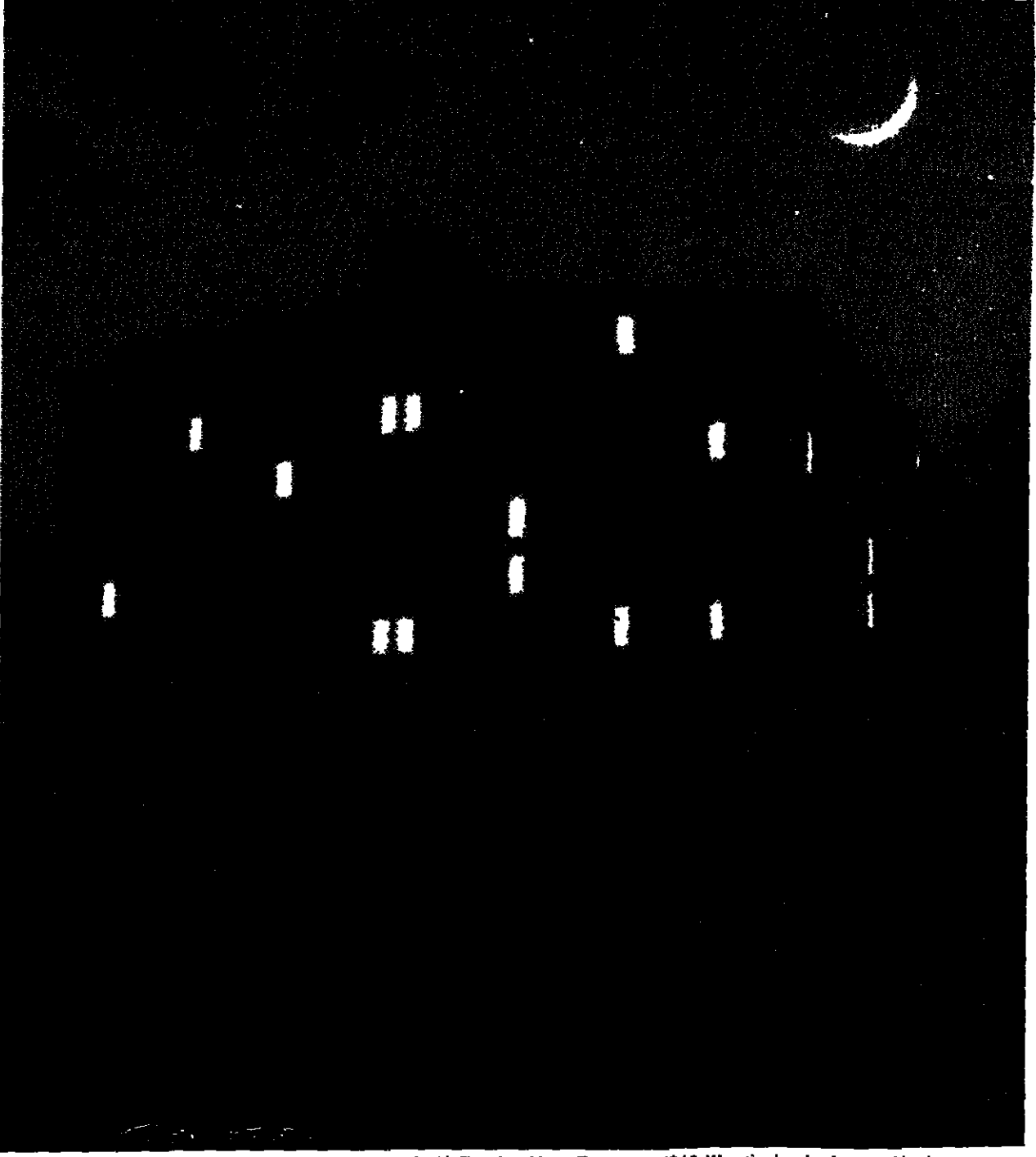
Although the court was told that social services had declared her "not mentally ill," the judge recommended that legal aid be made available to fund further psychiatric inquiries.

Sentencing Mrs Knowlson yesterday, Mr Justice Butterfield said: "In short, the defendant's conduct has been anti-social, dangerous and wholly unjustifiable, however genuine and well-intentioned she may be. Her conduct has been persistent and deliberate in the face of every effort to persuade her to stop."

The judge added that he could only ensure that Mrs Knowlson would stop the feeding by imprisoning her. He said she had been the cause of

"grave environmental problems, considerable distress and potential danger to the public."

The judge told of the "prodigious" quantity of bread bought by Mrs Knowlson, sometimes more than 100 loaves a week. He said it was distributed from dustbin liners on roads, car parks, embankments and car parks near her home. After she promised not to repeat the offence in December, she had gone into Croydon town centre in the early hours of the morning to feed the pigeons.



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKY



## news

# Blair urges unity to end fallout from Harman row

JOHN RENTOUL  
Political Correspondent

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, yesterday demanded unity and discipline in the run-up to the general election, at a special meeting of his Shadow Cabinet which reviewed polling evidence of the damage inflicted by the row over Harriet Harman's choice of school.

As a "strategy session" of the Shadow Cabinet in London, Mr Blair urged his colleagues to "focus like a laser" on the Conservative record.

Shadow ministers were buoyed by a convincing win in Thursday's by-election in Hemsworth, Yorkshire, which saw a robust 5.4 per cent swing from an already low Tory base to Labour. But Labour's Jon Trickett failed to crush Brenda Nixon, candidate for Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party. Ms Nixon polled nearly 1,200 votes and saved her deposit, gaining more than 5 per cent of the total.

The Shadow Cabinet was also given a sobering presentation of polling data which suggested the row over Ms Harman's decision to send her son to a selective school had damaged the party's standing in public opinion.

In-depth research among small groups of floating voters is believed to show that most of them agree with the Tory jibe that Ms Harman says "do as I say, not as I do".

The row has had a bigger impact on the public's views about

the Labour Party than anything else since Mr Blair became leader in July 1994, straining the "fragile" trust of voters who have come over to Labour in the past 18 months.

A spokesman for Mr Blair said the party's research showed that Ms Harman's controversial decision was a "talking point", but "did not shift many votes". But he said: "We will take a hit in the polls, mainly because we appeared on the defensive."

The Shadow Cabinet yesterday agreed a theme for a series of speeches and Commons debate over the next few weeks: "You're not safe with the Tories."

However, Michael Heseltine, the deputy prime minister, claimed: "Tony Blair has emerged from three weeks of political misjudgment rattled and in disarray."

"This is a man creating the conditions for a fifth period of Opposition."

Hemsworth result: Lab hold (maj 13,575), turnout 21,993 (39.5 per cent, down 36.5 points from 1992). Jon Trickett (Lab) 15,817 (71.9 per cent, up 1.1 points); Norman Hazell (C) 1,942 (8.8 per cent, down 9.8 points); David Ridgway (LD) 1,516 (6.9 per cent, down 3.7 points); Brenda Nixon (Socialist Labour Party) 1,193 (5.4 per cent); Lord David Sutch (Monster Ravin Loony Party) 652; Peter Davies (UK Independence Party) 455; Peggy Alexander (Green) 157; Mark Thomas (Mark Thomas Fri Nights Channel 4) 122; Michael Cooper (National Democrat, formerly National Front) 111; Diane Leighton (Natural Law Party) 28.

# Minister's pledge to transsexuals



Battle: Mark Rees now and (inset) as child Brenda Photograph: Tiddy Maitland-Titterton

JOHN RENTOUL  
Political Correspondent

A Bill to allow people who have undergone a sex change to marry and adopt children ran out of time in the Commons yesterday, but John Horam, a health minister, pledged that the Government would seriously consider the issue.

The Bill took up the 10-year campaign by Mark Rees, 54, who was born Brenda, to change his birth certificate. He is appealing against a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights, which backed the Government's refusal to allow the certificate to be amended.

A private member's Bill, presented by Alex Carlile, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on justice, would allow transsexuals to amend their birth certificate to match their chosen sex.

Mr Rees said he had to produce his birth certificate when applying for jobs, as in the civil service, or for higher education, and that the JobCentre computer records described him as "single female".

Above all, he would have wanted a legal marriage. He said: "All transsexuals who have undergone sex-change surgery have to accept that they will never be able to procreate. But that in itself is not bar to marriage."

"I would have dearly liked to marry and adopt a child within such a legal relationship. Any change is too late for me now, but the battle goes on."

In the Commons, Kevin Barron, a Labour health spokesman, said the law had not kept up with medical developments and he urged the Government to consider sympathetically a further Bill.

Mr Horam said: "I can assure you that the Government does recognise the importance of the issues which you are raising, that we do take them very seriously indeed and that we will indeed fully and carefully consider the issues raised by the Bill in all their many aspects."

# RAF attacked by Chinook crash families

JOHN ARLIDGE  
Scotland Correspondent

Relatives of the anti-terrorist officers who died in the Chinook crash on the Mull of Kintyre yesterday bitterly criticised the RAF for using the helicopter flight to Inverness as a low-flying training exercise.

On the final day of the public inquiry into the RAF's worst helicopter disaster, Paisley Sheriff Court heard that the crew flew passengers low over unfamiliar terrain to "boost experience" of low-level flying.

Through their solicitor the bereaved families condemned the practice - common in the RAF - and called on the inquiry chairman, Sheriff Sir Stephen Young, to recommend a ban.

Sheriff Young will publish his findings and recommendations later this year.

In the inquiry he heard accounts of how the Chinook, carrying 25 anti-terrorist officers and four Special Forces crew from Ulster to Inverness, plunged into the 1,400ft southern tip of the Kintyre peninsula in thick fog on the evening of 2 June 1994.

Despite two extensive inquiries, the accident remains a mystery. An internal Ministry of Defence investigation last year accused the two pilots, Flt Lt Jonathan Tapper and Flt Lt Richard Cook, of "gross negligence".

RAF investigators decided that they misjudged the rate of climb needed to clear the coastline. But after the month-long inquiry during which many new details about the crash emerged, the picture appears far less clear and the dead pilots' families insist mechanical, not human, error was to blame.

During the hearings, witnesses cast doubt on the actions of Flt Lt Tapper and Flt Lt Cook. By agreeing to fly the 10 members of the RUC Special Branch, nine army intelligence officers and six MIS officers to a top secret security conference in Inverness, they exceeded the RAF's daily flight time limits. Technicians argued that the two men may have entered incorrect coordinates in the aircraft's computer navigation system or have been "seduced" by the speed of the helicopter, which had just been upgraded.

However, other witnesses raised questions over the safety of the aircraft. Serving pilots and mechanics disclosed that the aircraft suffered a number of faults in the six weeks before the crash. The problems were so severe, the inquiry heard, that some RAF test pilots refused to fly the Chinook Mark II.

Junior RAF officers told the inquiry that the MoD's findings - based on "speculation and conjecture" - had angered servicemen. They and the relatives of the dead accuse the military of "covering-up" the real cause of the accident - that the Chinook, which had been rushed into service, was unfit to fly. They hope Sheriff Young will reject the findings of negligence.

The sheriff's task is made more difficult because the helicopter - like many military aircraft - did not have a "black box" data recorder or cockpit voice tape. He may be unable to pinpoint the cause of the crash but he is almost certain to question the decision to transport so many key security personnel in one helicopter and make binding recommendations on the future use of Chinooks.

Relatives of the dead are likely to receive compensation payments of around £6m.

# Channel 4 denies 'Girlie Show' offends women

MARIANNE MACDONALD  
Media Correspondent

Channel 4 furiously denied the findings of a survey yesterday, which found that its brash new youth programme *The Girlie Show* was a flop.

The channel's publicity claimed: "Women will want to watch it. Men will have to watch it." But according to Universal McCann, a media buying company, the opposite is true.

Research for the much-hyped show for laddish modern women found viewers almost universally disliked it. Only one in 10 intended to watch the second show last night and only 4 per cent of men.

The successor to the controversial *The Word* is aimed at 16- to 24-year-olds. But 38 per cent of women in that age group said it was offensive to women, while the figure rose to 60 per cent for women over 35.

Even more damning, 74 per cent of men in the target age group thought it was offensive to men. Every man over 35 found it offensive.

*The Girlie Show* went out for the first time last Friday at 11pm, marketed under the slogan: "Where girls are girls and boys are nervous."

Channel 4 describes it as "about women behaving badly. It's babes with brains." Regular features include "Toilet Talk",

in which girls are filmed talking candidly in women's lavatories; "Wanker of the Week", an award for disliked celebrities; and "Girls Night Out", featuring women hitting the town for a night on the tiles.

The survey is a blow to Channel 4. The first show won fewer than 3 million viewers and it is anxiously awaiting figures for the second. "It's simply dirty tricks," a spokesman said.

Before it went out, the show had already run into trouble over one of its three presenters, the half-American model Rachel Williams, who is prevented by her work permit from presenting the programme.

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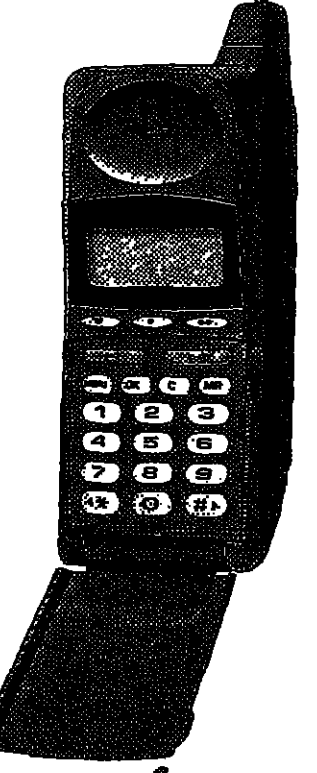
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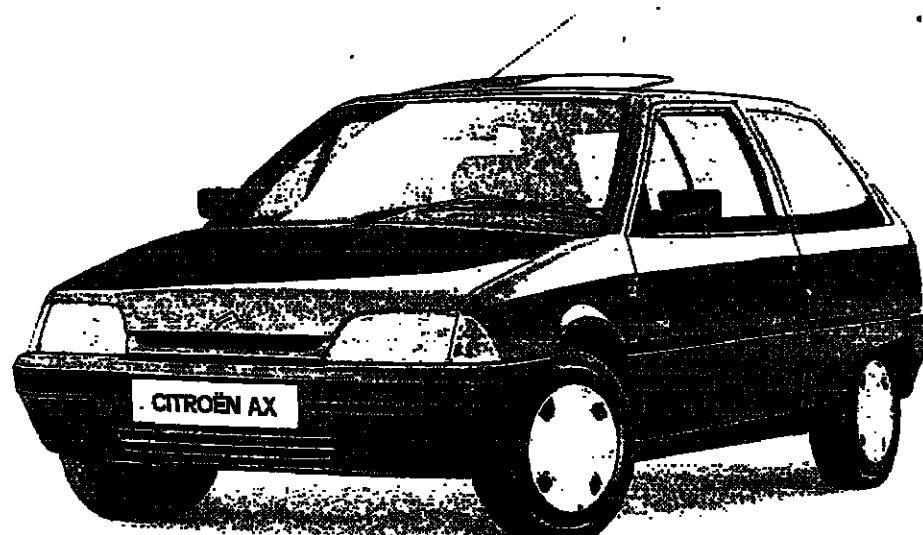
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# Jail threat to over-protective mother lifted

The devoted mother of a severely handicapped 18-year-old boy yesterday won her legal battle to overturn a court order which threatened her with jail if she showed him too much motherly love.

Three senior appeal judges ruled that the judge who granted Steven Vickers an injunction banning his mother from interfering with his right to live his own life - had no power to do so.

They said the injunction, with its threat of penal sanction against Mrs Marjorie Vickers, would only make matters worse because it had "the potential effect of destroying family relationships".

Members of the family would have to work out their "tragic" problems among themselves because the courts could not intervene, said Sir Stephen Brown, President of the High Court Family Division.

Mrs Vickers, 55, backed by her husband, Peter, 56, had challenged a High Court decision by Mr Justice Johnson last June that her intense devotion gave rise to "a real risk of infringement" of their adopted son's freedom.

Steven, who suffers from cerebral palsy, spastic quadriplegia and speech and learning difficulties, won the unique court order against his mother after complaining that she was

so over-protective that she was stifling his development and his desire to live at a special home and school where he had companionship, stimulation and education.

Mr and Mrs Vickers, who live in the Liversedge area of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, married in 1959. They had a child of their own in 1975, but the child died after only a few months, as a result of a disability not diagnosed or treated properly.

They then adopted Steven. Their joy was shattered when Steven, at about a year old, was diagnosed as having cerebral palsy, Kirklees District Council, the local authority in the area where they live, became involved in 1985, not because there was any question of ill-treatment or neglect, but because of the mother's fiercely over-protective attitude.

Mr Justice Johnson said last year that problems became increasingly intense, with Mrs Vickers' attempts to help professionals to advise and help both her and Steven.

She exercised increasingly close and intimate control of his life and felt that her experience of him qualified her exclusively to make decisions for him and about him.

Sir Stephen Brown, sitting with Lord Justices Waite and Morritt, said that nobody doubted the parents' love and devotion. Under dreadful pressure, they had done everything to make Steven's life bearable.

But Mrs Vickers had in the past found it difficult to surrender his care to others and at one time she frustrated his attendance at the school - one of only four of its kind in the country - where he was a weekly boarder.

The High Court judge had ruled that Steven had a common law right to live where he liked

and choose with whom he associated - and that his mother should not interfere with that right. However, Sir Stephen said the ruling was outside the judge's powers because there was no actual legal dispute between Steven and his parents.

Mr and Mrs Vickers, who also have a 15-year-old daughter, said they were "delighted" by the judgment. Both told the judges they would not interfere with Steven's wishes.

## Fringe calls tune for West End opening

ROS WYNNE-JONES

A fringe theatre company took to the stage of the Albery Theatre in the West End last night after being snapped up last week by the producer Bill Kenwright at an alternative venue in Brixton.

The Counterpoint Theatre Company's latest production, Willis Hall's *The Long And The Short And The Tall*, was within hours of opening at the Shaw Theatre, Brixton, when a deal was struck with the Albery.

Bill Kenwright, who organised the transfer in just six days, and without seeing the play first, said he was inspired by the novel business approach of Counterpoint when he visited their December production of *Streets of Dublin*. The actors subsidise themselves by running a teleshop company in their spare time, selling products for a variety of companies.

"They are basically a bunch of lads who said 'we're not sitting round waiting for the bloody phone to ring, we'll run our own theatre company and we'll fund it through a teleshop business'. I admired their capacity to dare."

I believe that among all the million dollar musicals, there should be room for talented people whose sets cost next to nothing. Basically, this project says a lot about the West End."

By January, Kenwright and Counterpoint had begun discussions. Last week, Kenwright



Big break: Counterpoint Theatre Company rehearsing yesterday for the first night at Albery Theatre

Photograph: Edward Webb

told the disbelieving actors, all graduates of the Webber Douglas drama school, that there was a slot free at the Albery.

The teleshop-theatre company was the idea of Ian Francis, Counterpoint's commercial director. He had heard of out-of-work American actors staffing teleshop companies on

the West Coast. "Why work in bars and restaurants, when you could be working in a much nicer environment with other actors?" The nature of teleshop work, with its flexible hours, was ideal, he said.

"People must be thinking we are very lucky, but we have worked bloody hard to get to the

West End. The three actors were feeling terrified, but then they got up on stage for a rehearsal and realised it's just the same really whether you perform at the Shaw or the Albery. They are handling being thrown into the limelight very well."

The company, Professional Communications, raised £100,000

in the last nine months for Counterpoint, allowing them to afford actors like London's *Burning*'s Mark Arden and Burt Kwouk, who feature in *The Long And The Short And The Tall*. The Shaw Theatre will now

be empty for three weeks, but theatre director Jo Scarratt wishes Counterpoint the best of luck. "They saw their opportunity and took it. They are very single minded and they deserve every success."

## MP 'assailed by young girls at Thai sex club'

A Tory MP yesterday told the House of Commons of a visit to Thai sex clubs as part of a parliamentary fact-finding mission.

James Cosentino said he and other MPs had witnessed "a hallucinatory coupling by two young people" and had been "assailed on all sides by very young hostesses".

The Gillingham MP - who stressed his distaste for what he had witnessed - was speaking in support of the Sexual Offences (Conspiracy and Incitement) Bill which aims to crack down on organisers of sex tours used by British paedophiles to go on holiday in third world countries for sex with child prostitutes.

He recalled that he had been a member of an Inter-Parliamentary Union delegation to Thailand and Indonesia in 1989. "It was our experience that the Thai authorities, far from wanting to discourage this sort of activity at that time, were turning a Nelson eye on the whole procedure," he said.

Mr Cosentino said the delegation had a very busy week which included visits to Cambodian refugee camps and meeting "countless politicians and generals".

"But it was held that our education about Thailand would not be complete without a visit to the district of Pat Pong - and it is a very appropriate name for this district."

"We were told that we should go and view some of the clubs in Pat Pong and that is precisely what we did. We were greeted

in this rather unsavoury and seedy area of Bangkok by all sorts of touts offering all sorts of services, but principally trying to sell the clubs by which they were employed."

"We went to one club and the first thing that we were met by was what I can only really describe as a hallucinatory coupling by two young people and a large audience who were enjoying this particular spectacle. And from there it was downhill all the way."

The Bill, proposed by John Marshall, Tory MP for Hendon South, gained an unopposed Second Reading and is now virtually certain to become law.

The Bill would make it an offence - with maximum life sentences - to incite people to commit sexual offences against children abroad. But it will not eradicate sex tourism.

The Government reacted coolly to calls for it to go further and take swift action to ensure so-called "sex tourists" could be prosecuted here for crimes against children committed abroad.

Tom Sackville, a junior Home Office minister, said there would be "considerable practical difficulties involved" in mounting prosecutions in the UK for offences committed abroad. "There are doubts as to whether extra-territorial jurisdiction would be likely to be of assistance in bringing to justice British nationals who commit offences against children in other countries," he added.

## BRANCH INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS CURRENT INTEREST RATES

EFFECTIVE FROM 3 FEBRUARY 1996

	% Gross	% Net	% Net	% Net	% Gross	% Net	% Net	% Net
	CAR	CAR	CAR	CAR	CAR	CAR	CAR	CAR
<b>120 DAY ACCOUNT</b> (Annual & Monthly)								
£50,000 or more	6.00	4.50			£40,000 or more	3.00	2.25	
£25,000 - £49,999	5.00	3.75			£20,000 - £39,999	2.30	1.73	
£10,000 - £24,999	4.50	3.38			£10,000 - £19,999	1.83	1.39	
£5,000 - £9,999	4.20	3.15			£5,000 - £9,999	0.80	0.60	
£500 - £4,999	0.50	0.38			£500 - £4,999	0.60	0.45	
					£500 - £4,999	0.50	0.38	
<b>NINETY DAY ACCOUNT</b> (Annual & Monthly)					<b>CURRENT ACCOUNT GOLD</b>			
£50,000 or more	5.00	3.75			£100,000 or more	5.41	5.55	4.13
£25,000 - £49,999	4.05	3.04			£50,000 - £99,999	5.13	5.25	3.83
£10,000 - £24,999	3.85	2.89			£25,000 - £49,999	4.94	5.03	3.71
£5,000 - £9,999	3.65	2.74			£10,000 - £24,999	4.89	5.00	3.67
£2,500 - £4,999	3.00	2.25			£5,000 - £9,999	0.50	0.50	0.38
£500 - £2,499	0.50	0.38						
<b>SIXTY DAY ACCOUNT</b> (Annual)					<b>CURRENT ACCOUNT</b>			
£50,000 or more	4.00	3.00			£50,000 or more	3.25	3.30	2.44
£25,000 - £49,999	3.20	2.40			£25,000 - £49,999	2.28	2.30	1.71
£10,000 - £24,999	2.45	1.84			£10,000 - £24,999	1.28	1.30	0.97
£5,000 - £9,999	1.65	1.24			£5,000 - £9,999	0.60	0.60	0.45
£500 - £4,999	0.90	0.68			£1,000 - £4,999	0.55	0.55	0.41
					£500 - £999	0.50	0.50	0.38
<b>SIXTY DAY ACCOUNT</b> (Monthly)					<b>TESSA I</b> (Annual)			
£50,000 or more	3.93	4.00	2.95	2.99	£1 or more	6.25		
£25,000 - £49,999	3.15	3.20	2.36	2.39	Year 1-4	6.75		
£10,000 - £24,999	2.42	2.45	1.82	1.83	Year 5	7.50		
£5,000 - £9,999	1.39	1.40	1.04	1.04	<b>TESSA II</b>			
£500 - £4,999	0.50	0.50	0.38	0.38	£9,000	8.00		
<b>THIRTY DAY ACCOUNT</b> (Annual)					£3,000 - £8,999	7.50		
£50,000 or more	3.05	2.29			<b>CHARITY DEPOSIT ACCOUNT</b>			
£25,000 - £49,999	2.40	1.80			£1 or more	6.00		
£10,000 - £24,999	1.95	1.46			<b>BASIC SAVINGS RATE</b>			
£5,000 - £9,999	0.90	0.68			£50 or more	0.50		0.38
£500 - £4,999	0.50	0.38						
<b>THIRTY DAY ACCOUNT</b> (Monthly)					<b>CLOSED ISSUES</b>			
£50,000 or more	3.01	3.05	2.26	2.28	£50,000 or more	4.25		3.19
£25,000 - £49,999	2.37	2.40	1.78	1.79	£25,000 - £49,999	3.75		2.81
£10,000 - £24,999	1.93	1.95	1.45	1.46	£10,000 - £24,999	3.50		2.63
£5,000 - £9,999	0.90	0.90	0.68	0.68	£5,000 - £9,999	3.00		2.25
£500 - £4,999	0.50	0.50	0.38	0.38	£500 - £4,999	0.50		0.38
<b>INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNT</b>					<b>PREMIER GOLD</b> (Monthly)			
£50,000 or more	3.01	3.05	2.26	2.28	£50,000 or more	3.50		2.63
£25,000 - £49,999	2.37	2.40	1.78	1.79	£25,000 - £49,999	3.00		2.25
£10,000 - £24,999	1.93	1.95	1.45	1.46	£10,000 - £24,999	2.70		2.03
£5,000 - £9,999	0.90	0.90	0.68	0.68	£5,000 - £9,999	2.20		1.65
£500 - £4,999	0.50	0.50	0.38	0.38	£500 - £4,999	0.50		0.38
<b>NET CORPORATE DEPOSIT ACCOUNT</b>					<b>TESSA P</b> (Monthly)			
£10,000 or more	6.00				£1 or more	5.75		
£1 - £9,999	0.50				Year 1-4	6.25		
					Year 5	7.50		

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3 Please note that interest paid from 6 April 1996 will be taxed at the lower rate of 20%.

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5 Current Account minimum opening balance £2,500.

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8 Interest will be paid on balances below £50 to customers who are registered as being under 22 years of age. (Please contact your local branch for full details).

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## Car park attacker jailed for four years

An unemployed man who left a builder with massive injuries after he complained children had vandalised his car was yesterday jailed for four years.

Judge David Lynch told Richard Mellor, 32: "Considerable force was required to break nearly every bone in his face, from the base of his skull down to his teeth. It was necessary to rebuild his face by inserting 11 metal plates."

"And one of the fractured bones damaged an optic nerve, permanently blinding him in one eye."

Liverpool Crown Court heard that Barry Hayes, 50, still suffered pain, following the attack in August 1994. A jury found Mellor guilty a week ago of causing grievous bodily harm. They acquitted him of the more serious charge of grievous bodily harm with intent.

Yesterday Mellor, a father-of-four, stood with eyes closed as the judge added: "Parliament has set a maximum sentence for grievous bodily harm of five years. This case comes really close to the most serious in that category."

During the five-day trial, the court heard how Mr Hayes found his BMW car had been scratched while he was in the Heath public house in south Liverpool. He reprimanded a group of children, including the defendant's seven-year-old son.

When Mr Hayes drove away, the children shouted abuse at him but ran off when he stopped and got out.

Mellor later returned with the boy, who had left his bicycle in the car park. He attacked Mr Hayes, punching him and kicking him about the head, causing terrible injuries.

Mellor, of Verney Crescent, Garston, Liverpool, claimed Mr Hayes threw the first punch, but the judge said: "I have no doubt whatsoever in my mind that Mr Hayes did not attack you."

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## international

## New Hampshire stays perverse as ever

DAVID USBORNE  
Manchester, New Hampshire

There is one thing you cannot take away from the people of New Hampshire: they know their politics. And so they should. Once every four years they kick off the United States presidential campaign with the first primary contest, the results of which have historically set the course for the rest of the race.

Proof, as if any were needed, of their superior political awareness was provided this week by Carl Hubbard, a professor of political science at the University of New Hampshire, who designed a quiz to compare his state's savvy with the rest of the nation's. And New Hampshire scored well.

THE US  
PRESIDENTIAL  
ELECTIONS

Some examples: Question one (easy): "What job does Al Gore have?" Here, 93 per cent said Vice-President, compared with 84 per cent nationally. Question three (harder): "What majority of House and Senate is required to override a Presidential veto?" The answer? Two-thirds. In New Hampshire 70 per cent got it right compared with 37 per cent nationally.

New Hampshire, more familiarly known as the Granite State for its majestic mountains in the north, is a state of political junkies. And this is the time they get their fix. From now until voting day on 20 February, the seven principal hopefuls in the race for the Republican nomination for 1996 will criss-cross their state, visiting schools, churches, adult education centres and even private homes in the hope of winning their favour.

The audience here is no push-over. This is the state that has "Live Free or Die" emblazoned on car number plates; its overwhelmingly conservative citizenry has an ingrained suspicion of federal government, and especially of taxation. This year in particular they are in curmudgeonly mood. One after another they grumble about the cynicism of the election process, and many complain that the

candidates on offer are simply not up to scratch. Take Jody Oberman, 25, and Ginger McCartin, 39, on a coffee break from their natural gas company in Manchester, a down-to-earth city of austere red brick that grew from cotton milling at the end of the last century. They will vote - that is the responsibility of everyone - but they will do so with unusual misgivings.

"Frankly, I'm depressed," says Ms Oberman, explaining that this will be her third primary vote, and for the first time she cannot find any candidate she really likes.

"Before, we always seemed to have a much clearer choice, but not this time. It's all very grim, and it shouldn't be like that. You should be happy vot-

ing for your president. I'm upset and I feel kind of helpless."

Ms McCartin concurs. She is irritated by the negativity of the television advertising which, thanks to the hugely expensive blitz launched by the media baron, Steve Forbes, is jamming the airwaves more than in previous races. "Really, it makes me wonder why we do bother to vote. Trying to find a great statesman in this country seems to get harder and harder."

The depth of disenchantment is a bit surprising. Four years ago, when President Bill Clinton almost got torpedoed by flaps over a past relationship with Gennifer Flowers and over his avoidance of the Vietnam draft, New Hampshire was in recession, with unemployment

soaring. Things here, as in the rest of the country, are supposed to have turned around now.

But scepticism about the economic recovery is a common theme in discussions with voters. The statistics might look healthy, but people are still struggling, they insist. Eileen Kelly, 45, an antiques trader, is one who is not convinced. "They're trying to tell us that the economy is better, but I'm sorry, it's not better. No one has any money for little extras, and that's what life is meant to be all about."

Such dark spirits do not bode well for any known-quantity candidates and this time that means Mr Dole in particular. In two days here, I have barely found a soul who is determined to vote for him. In 1992, New

Hampshire wounded George Bush by giving surprising support to Pat Buchanan who came a strong second with 37 per cent.

Mr Buchanan is here again, and he still has many fervent supporters. But he also is now a bit too familiar, and herein lies the surging popularity of Mr Forbes, this year's challenger to the establishment. Ms McCartin, Ms Oberman and Ms Kelly all concede that they will probably plump for Mr Forbes.

It helps that the principal Forbes pitch is for a flat 17 per cent tax on individuals and businesses. Even if a flat tax would mean many actually paying more than they do now, it sounds thoroughly subversive. And subversive is what New Hampshire likes to be.

Internet  
activists  
foil  
ban on  
Nazis

ANDREW BROWN

Some of America's most admired colleges are being used by free speech activists to make Nazi propaganda available in Germany. The University of California, Carnegie-Mellon University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have all become hosts to copies of a Nazi web-site to which Germany's state-owned Deutsche Telekom last week tried to block access.

The latest round in the fight over international attempts to censor the Internet started when a subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom blocked all access to Webcom, one of the largest suppliers of Internet-accessible advertising space in California, because one of the 1,500 sites there was maintained by Ernst Zündel, a neo-Nazi based in California. His site is dedicated to asserting that the Holocaust never happened, which is illegal under German law.

Within days of the ban, Debra McCullough, a student at Carnegie Mellon, made the Zündel material available from his campus. He also made it simple for anyone who wished to follow his example to make a copy on to their university's computers, which seems to have been widely done.

Such actions, performed by people who have no Nazi sympathies themselves, have mystified some Germans on the Internet. One German commentator said: "I don't understand all that activity for a person of that history. I like your enthusiasm and believe in free speech, [but] I really hate your attitude that you know what is right for Germany to do. We are a democracy and we have reasons why we did certain things."

This attitude seems incomprehensible to most American users of the Internet, who see what they had imagined as a global republic, run to their rules, suddenly under threat all around the world. The first Japanese to be charged with disseminating pornography on the net was arrested in Tokyo on Thursday.

In Washington on the same day, Congress overwhelmingly approved a telecommunications Bill which has the incidental effect of severely restricting free speech on the American portions of the Internet, by making it an offence to send "indecent" material to minors. Civil libertarians believe this portion of the bill is unconstitutional, but until the courts have struck it down, they claim, it will prohibit even the dissemination of abortion advice over the Internet.

As the free-wheeling culture of the Internet comes into contact with various authoritarian regimes around the world, some yield and others fight. The government of Malaysia has admitted that it cannot hope to censor the Internet in future.

Forbes flies  
in face of  
hard rightRUPERT CORNWELL  
Washington

If one thing distinguishes the campaign of Steve Forbes (apart, that is, from saturation bombing by negative advertising) it is the candidate's remarkable ability to "stay on message" - namely, to bring almost any political interrogation back to the flat-tax proposal that has been the launch-pad for his success.

But no media spotlight is brighter than that which zeroes in on a surprise front-runner for his party's nomination and it is gradually illuminating the views



Steve Forbes: Pro-choice and liberal on gay rights

of the publishing multi-millionaire on issues other than his 17 per cent tax rate for all. Somewhat surprisingly, what emerges is a man in the mainstream of the party on foreign affairs and very much on its tolerant, quasi-libertarian wing on social matters.

On the litmus issue of abortion for instance, so important for the religious right that wields influence in the Republican primaries, Mr Forbes plainly fails the test. He does support notifying the parents of under-age mothers and the outlawing of late-term abortions, but says other changes will require a shift in the attitudes of average Americans first: in

other words, no constitutional amendment banning abortion.

On homosexuals in the military, Mr Forbes backs the "don't ask, don't tell" approach of Bill Clinton, far removed from the rigid opposition of Republican conservatives like Jesse Helms of North Carolina, some of whose advisers help Mr Forbes. On same-sex marriages, Mr Forbes described himself as "hopelessly conventional. If people want to live together, that's fine. But compassion is not approval." Again, a tolerance not always found in Republican ranks.

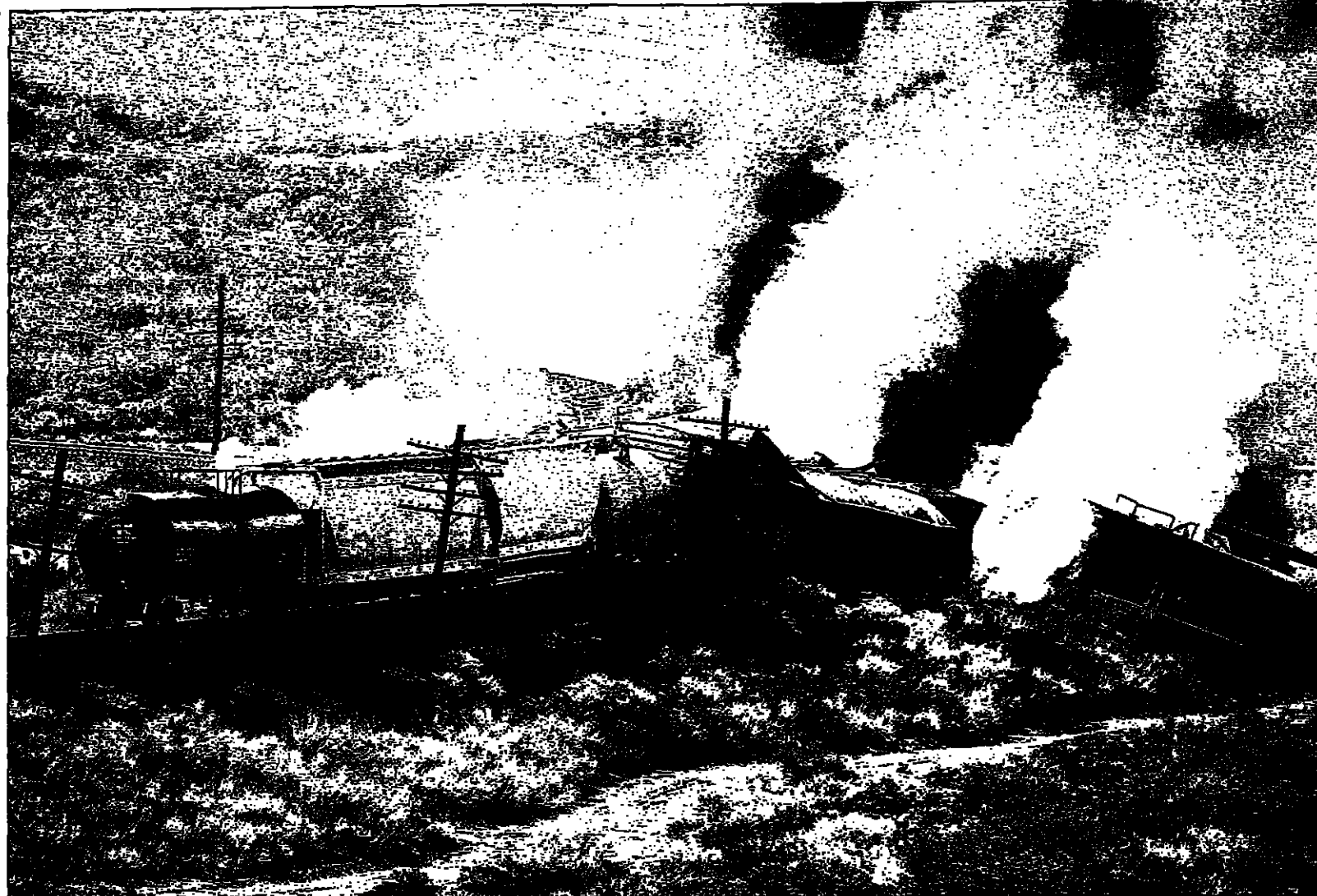
In foreign policy, Mr Forbes is an economic internationalist (as befits a man whose company owns a home in London, a chateau in France and a palace in Morocco). He supports free trade. He has not embraced the headline anti-immigration policies of "America First" conservatives like Pat Buchanan.

On defence and security matters, however, he is less forthright. He favours the deployment of American troops abroad only where vital US interests are at stake. Bosnia, he says, does not meet that criterion. Far better to allow the Muslims to obtain arms and fend for themselves.

In short, Forbes the politician combines the supply-side zeal of his mentor, Jack Kemp, the former Bush Cabinet member, with the "keep government out of the pocket book and out of the bedroom" philosophy of men like the Massachusetts Governor, William Weld. Unlike Mr Forbes, Messrs Weld and Kemp decided not to run for president in 1996.

But everything comes back to economics and the flat tax. In Iowa, he tells audiences in Iowa where an estimated 40 per cent of caucus participants are from the religious right, economics and values are part and parcel of one another. Get the economy moving and values will take care of themselves.

## End of the line for freight train as deadly load is derailed



End of the line: Clouds of acrid smoke climb above the wreckage of a train in the Cajon Pass, 10 miles north of Los Angeles. At least one crew member died when the freight service, carrying hazardous chemicals, left the rails and caught fire on Thursday. Photograph: Michael Caulfield/AP

## Nixon's flaws pay off in the end

If ever you buy a stamp from the post office with a misprint on it, do not complain and, above all, do not exchange it for a pristine one, writes David USBORNE. You might discover that it is worth a little more than what you paid for it.

This is the lesson learned by a happy citizen of Virginia who last year bought a sheet of 160 first-class stamps marking the death of the former president, Richard Nixon. It was only when he first tore one off to stick on an envelope that he noticed something odd.

The stamps were what the cognoscenti call "inverts". Because of an extremely rare printing error, they had been passed through the printing press the wrong way. Nixon's face was split in half, with his chin and mouth at the top and his forehead at the bottom. Moreover, his name was printed upside down across his famous nose.

The purchaser, who has remained anonymous, did the right thing. He offered just one of the stamps for auction at Christie's in New York, where

experts told him he might get between \$5,000 and \$10,000 for it. But when it went sale this week it fetched \$16,675 (£10,900).

Nothing is known about the bidder either, except that he too is American and was not present at the sale. Instead, according to Colin Fraser, head of Christie's stamp department, he bought the stamp by private arrangement.

There is little that is secret about the small fortune the original purchaser stands to make, if he can continue to sell

the stamps for the same amount of money - a grand total of \$2.3m. Not a bad return for an original investment at his local post office of just \$1.20.

For now, though, the mystery seller is biding his time, apparently keeping the other 159 of his wonky stamps in his desk drawer. He may still be pondering the wonder of his luck. The Post Office has said it printed no fewer than 80 million of the Nixon stamps last year and, as far as it knows, only this single sheet came out botched.



Expensive error: The 32c stamp that fetched \$16,675

## Cowboy rustles the American dream

"If one writes about war," wrote Graham Greene, "self-respect demands that occasionally one shares the risks." If one writes about America, self-respect demands that occasionally one tries to share the passion for American football.

At the very least, you have to tune in on Super Bowl Sunday, one of the three great occasions in the American calendar - the other two being Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July. The Super Bowl is to America what the FA Cup Final is to England, or the Celtic-Rangers match is to Scotland. The game itself is not as good, lacking as it is in continuity and momentum. It's like a game of chess in which the pawns are played by extremely large men. (The "offensive line" of the Dallas Cowboys, one of the teams in Sunday's Super Bowl, averaged 23 stone in weight.)

But the spectacle, and the hysteria surrounding it, make the solemnities at Wembley appear dull by comparison. Not that there is less passion at the Cup Final. There is probably more. The Americans just know how to orchestrate it better. And I, sitting in front of the television with friends on Sunday evening, danced to the NBC conductor's tune.

Having failed to generate any enthusiasm for the ping-pong repetitiveness of basketball or the excruciating nuance of baseball, it was with relief - eager as I am to penetrate the local culture - that towards the end of autumn I discovered an appetite for American Football.

## WASHINGTON DAYS

The team for which I inexplicably developed an affection were the San Francisco 49ers. Sadly they were knocked out in the Super Bowl play-offs (we'd call them the quarter finals) so I transferred my fickle loyalties to the plucky Green Bay Packers, who in turn lost out in the semi-finals to the dreaded Dallas Cowboys.

They call the Cowboys "America's Team". Because they have lots of money and they always win, they have fan clubs in every American city. It's only here in Washington that people really detest them. Something to do with a particularly bitter rivalry, they tell me, with the Washington Redskins. Lacking the history, I hate them because they're flashy and obnoxious and conceited and their owner gets to buy all the fastest and biggest players.

So my team on Sunday were - or, as we say in America with more grammatical exactitude, "was" - the obstinately unfashionable Pittsburgh Steelers. The Cowboys wear these snazzy silver, white and blue uniforms. The Steelers wear plain yellow and brown. The Cowboys' quarterback - queen to the beefy pawns - is the pretentiously named, baby-face handsome Troy Aikman. The Steelers' quarterback is a bushy-bearded yeoman with Christmas cracker teeth called Neil O'Donnell. A friend who watched the match with me

swears that the Cowboys' clean-cut coach, Barry Switzer, sports hair implants. The Steelers' coach, Bill Cowher, looks like a demented assassin in a Quentin Tarantino movie. The distance between his chin and his mouth is twice that between his mouth and the top of his brow.

For all of these reasons I loved the Steelers more. Never mind that the broadcast lasted three and a half hours and the game one. That for every two minutes of game we had four of commercials - which NBC priced at a world record rate of \$1.2m (£800,000)



All-American game: Cowboys' running back Emmitt Smith displays his power on Sunday. Photograph: Reuters

per 30 seconds. That half time lasted 45 minutes so we could have half an hour more of commercials, five minutes of analysis and 10 of Diana Ross doing a medley before disappearing into the night sky in a helicopter. Never mind all this. It's the American way, and I've got used to it, and it did not stop me from getting very excited indeed when I looked in the third quarter as if the Steelers might bounce back from an abominable start and spoil the victory party - laboriously prepared weeks in advance - of the Cowboys. When Yancey Thigpen scored a touchdown I celebrated with innocent delight. In the end the Steelers lost but they had put on a brave show and you couldn't ask for

more than that. So why then did I feel dirty when I woke up the morning after the Super Bowl? Why did I feel like a ravished damsel inveigled by a silver-tongued suitor into giving away her virtue?

It was an image that appeared on the screen after the game was over that did it. The man who went up to the podium to receive the trophy and receive the acclaim of the crowd was not a player. It wasn't even the chess-master coach. It fell upon a man in a suit to bask in the honour and the glory for the simple reason that he happens to have pots and pots of money and that he fixed things up so that Pepsi and Nike could blast our brains all night with commercials.

It fell upon Jerry Jones, the owner of the Dallas Cowboys, to be the real star of the show, to hold the trophy aloft, as the hands of his players' strained at the bottom of the screen for a touch, because he is a man dedicated - crassly, wholeheartedly, eyes wide open - to the proposition that professional American Football, diverting as it might be for the masses, is first and foremost big business for the few.

I felt dirty because I felt cheated and abused. I had opened up to the game, had succumbed to its boyish enthusiasms, and been conned. That's how it felt anyway. The terrible thing is that next year I will, in all probability, watch the whole damn spectacle all over again.

John Carlin

Bosnian Muslims feel  
heat from WashingtonTONY BARBER  
Europe Editor

The US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, flew to former Yugoslavia yesterday for a visit intended to maintain pressure on Bosnia's three rival leaderships to adhere to last month's Paris peace settlement. Somewhat unexpectedly, he may find the party he needs to talk toughest to be not the Serbs or the Croats but Bosnia's Muslim-led government.

President Alija Izetbegovic and his colleagues have disappointed the Americans on a variety of issues over the last month, ranging from the retention of military contacts with Iran to actions jeopardising democracy and multi-culturalism inside Bosnia. The US was the Bosnian government's strongest supporter in the West during the 1992-95 war. Lately some of that sympathy has started to turn into frustration.

Only yesterday the International Committee of the Red Cross discovered 88 Serb prisoners in a Bosnian government prison in the northern city of Tuzla. They were being held in violation of the peace terms, which stated that all prisoners of war should be released by 19 January.

The peace agreement also stipulated that all foreign Islamic fighters should leave Bosnian territory by the same date, but US officials say Iranian military and intelligence

personnel remain in Bosnia under the cover of humanitarian missions. The Clinton administration warned recently that if these men did not leave, and if Bosnia's government continued to delay the release of prisoners of war, the US would reconsider its promise to equip the Bosnian army.

This brought protests from Bosnia's outgoing Foreign Minister, Muhamed Sacirbey, who criticised the US and its NATO allies for doing too little to establish what happened to thousands of Muslim men who went missing during the war. He said the Serbs still held at least 1,000 Muslim prisoners, a much higher figure than the estimate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which said last Thursday the Serbs were holding only 22.

Mr Sacirbey said it was in the West's interest to equip and train the Bosnian army. In an apparent allusion to military supplies covertly sent to the Muslim-led forces during the war from Iran and other Islamic states, he added: "If Bosnia can defend itself with Western weapons, it doesn't have to apply for other means from other sources."

Another point of friction between the US and the Bosnian government is the latter's delay in granting an amnesty to ordinary Serb soldiers who fought against the Muslim-led army. Western countries view the amnesty as an important ele-

ment in persuading the Serb population of five districts of Sarajevo to stay there, after the areas are handed over to Muslim-Croat control.

During his trip, Mr Christopher is due to hold talks with President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia in Zagreb and President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia in Belgrade. He is expected to spell out the US view that all alleged war criminals indicted by a United Nations tribunal based in The Hague must be brought to trial. Fifty-two people have so far been charged with war crimes, of whom 45 are Serbs and seven are Croats. According to lawyers in The Hague, Serbia has offered practically no assistance to the tribunal.

Croatia says it is willing to co-operate but has indicated that its attitude is influenced by Serbia's foot-dragging. So far, only one person charged with war crimes, a Bosnian Serb former karate instructor, is in the tribunal's custody.

About 20,000 displaced Serb civilians in Banja Luka are waiting to re-enter the area known as the "avril", the largest chunk of Bosnian territory to be handed back under the Dayton peace accord, writes Christopher Bellamy. Bosnian Serb authorities are not letting them return until the Nato-led peace force has secured the area. Under the peace agreement the Bosnian Croats who overran the avril in the summer must withdraw by today.

Men's dilem...

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# Internet activists foil ban on Nazis

ANDREW BROWN

Some of America's most admired colleges are being used by free speech activists to make Nazi propaganda available in Germany. The University of California, Carnegie Mellon University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have all become hosts to copies of a Nazi web-site which Germany's state-owned Deutsche Telekom last week tried to block access.

The latest round in the fight over international attempts to censor the Internet started when a subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom blocked all access to Web.com, one of the largest suppliers of Internet-accessible advertising space in Germany, because one of the links on the site was maintained by Ernst Zündel, a neo-Nazi living in California. His site is dedicated to asserting that the Holocaust never happened, a view illegal under German law.

Within days of the German McCollough, a former Carnegie Mellon student, and Zündel, a neo-Nazi, were his company. He said the simple act of linking to a copy of the site on his computers, which had been widely available, had been enough to get him caught.

Such actions have infuriated people who see the Internet as a place where they can express their views without fear of censorship. They argue that the Internet is a global marketplace of ideas, and that it should be free from government interference.

The German government's attempt to block access to the site has been widely criticised by human rights groups and Internet activists. They argue that the Internet is a global marketplace of ideas, and that it should be free from government interference.

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Yeltsin's dilemma: Making sure workers are paid may help President's chances of re-election, but inflation waits in the wings



Check out: A miner changes before leaving work at Maxim Gorky pit to join the nation-wide strike

# Kremlin faces more strikes as miners' unrest spreads

PHIL REEVES  
Moscow

The Russian government spent a second day struggling to find a resolution to a national miners' strike yesterday amid fears that the dispute has further dented Boris Yeltsin's flagging chances of re-election, and could spread to other industries where workers have also gone unpaid for months.

The Yeltsin administration is acutely aware that the hundreds of thousands of miners who have downed tools – a protest that seems to have been co-ordinated with a mass walk-out by their counterparts in the Ukraine – are in a dilemma shared by millions of other Russians. Sectors that rely on the Russian government for funds – defence plants, nuclear power stations, the armed forces, teachers, health workers and many more – have experienced long delays in pay recently. Scarcely a day passes without a group of employees launching a protest after going unpaid for months; some even resort to hunger strikes. Last

night, Russia's air traffic controllers announced plans to resume their national strike next week, which was launched in December but suspended shortly afterwards.

Delays in pay are often simply the result of the ruthless application of economics. Russia's high inflation (currently 4 per cent a month) means the cash-starved government can cut its costs merely by holding back funds for long periods. Power stations, defence plants and other enterprises which owe billions of roubles to the coal mines have resorted to the same tactic. Nor are matters helped by the absence of any effective state institution for recovering debts.

But the miners are also the victim of a more basic Russian phenomenon: theft and corruption. There is little doubt that a proportion of the government funds sent out to pay them has disappeared into the pockets of bureaucrats on the way. Significantly, some of those lobbying for the outdated and uneconomic coal industry to be overhauled are demanding that

Rosugol, the state-run coal monopoly, is stripped of its power to handle government subsidies. "Clearly there is a lack of control over money that is handed out to Rosugol," one Western economist said.

For the miners, the knowledge that their wage packets have been stolen is yet another addition to a long list of grievances. Although they earn an average of about £130 a month, well above the national norm, safety, health and general working conditions are dismal. However, miners do not usually go hungry. When unpaid, they fall back on a strong extended family structure as well as supplies that they, like almost every Russian, have amassed from farming their allotments, and money earned in the country's massive black economy.

Yesterday the government was working to solve the strike, which has shut down 80 per cent of Russia's mines, stretching across several time zones from western Russia to the Far East. The administration, which claims to have paid all its debts to the miners – and is, at times,

posing as a champion of their cause – dispatched its new economics minister, Vladimir Kadamnikov, for negotiations with union leaders. In discussions which one labour leader described as "rich in content and useful", he offered to produce settlement terms next week.

The betting in Moscow is that the government will settle its differences with the miners soon, before the mid-winter power cuts that some predict. But the worries of either party will not end there. The miners know that, if it is re-elected in June, the Yeltsin government is bent on closing down 140 of Russia's 240 mines, many of which are Stalin-era relics and reflect the utter disregard for profit of a centrally-planned economy.

The Kremlin knows that if other sections of Russia's restless workforce start clamouring for their money – teachers in 53 regions are already on strike – it may have to cough up. This would risk a return to runaway inflation and could jeopardise a crucial \$9bn (£5.8bn) loan under negotiation with the International Monetary Fund.

# Kohl warns of war if European Union fails

SARAH HELM  
Brussels

Chancellor Helmut Kohl yesterday warned in the most strident terms that a retreat from further political integration in Europe could plunge the continent into new "nationalist" wars in the next century.

In language intended to challenge the rise of Euro-scepticism – no longer a merely British phenomenon – the German leader proclaimed: "The policy of European integration is in reality a question of war and peace in the 21st century."

Beseccing his European partners to take far-reaching decisions on further EU integration at the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) in March, he said: "If we suffer a set-back now on the road to Europe it will take considerably longer than one generation before we are given such an opportunity again."

Mr Kohl said he was not advocating a "superstate". But he added: "We have no desire to return to the nation state of old. It cannot solve the great problems of the 21st century. Nationalism has brought great suffering to our continent."

Recalling his friendship with Francois Mitterrand, who died last month, he said that the former French president shared his view that "nationalism is war".

Mr Kohl's warnings were clearly directed in part at Britain, where the Government has been fuelling fears of further integration and questioning the timetable for the creation of a European single currency.

"If individual partners are not prepared, or able, to participate in certain steps towards integration," he said, "the others should not be denied the opportunity to move forward and develop increased co-operation in which all partners are welcome to take part." This was a renewed plea for the Franco-German proposals for a "hard-core" Europe of federally-minded countries which would relegate Britain to a Euro-sceptic periphery.

Mr Kohl's speech, delivered at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, where he was awarded an honorary doctorate, came as doubts about the future course of Europe have reached a new pitch. European politicians have increasingly questioned the timetable for the creation of a single currency by 1999; enthusiasm for enlargement of the EU to the east has waned; and there is growing evidence that the reform process due to start next month will be limited.

Mr Kohl has frequently argued that strengthening the EU is essential if German power is to be contained. His fear is that a dominant Germany, unshackled by common European rules, would fuel nationalism among its neighbours, putting Europe back on the road to the wars which disfigured the first half of this century.

The Chancellor made it clear that, despite warnings of the imminent collapse of the plans for European Monetary Union, he believes that the single currency remains the linchpin of the next phase of European integration. He called for "considerable efforts on everybody's part to achieve a major step forward". He also restated his conviction that enlarging the EU to take in new members from the East was crucial to Europe's future.

Mr Kohl emphasised that the IGC reform process should be used to restructure European institutions for greater power-sharing in the next century. He set out four areas in which Germany wants to see progress: a strengthening of the EU's foreign and security policy; more pooling of powers in criminal justice; greater openness in decision-making and more power for the European Parliament.

Acknowledging that warnings of further war were not popular, the Chancellor said: "My warnings may contain an unpleasant truth. [But] if there is no momentum for continued integration this will not only lead to standstill but also to retrogression."

# Tajik army rebels forced to retreat

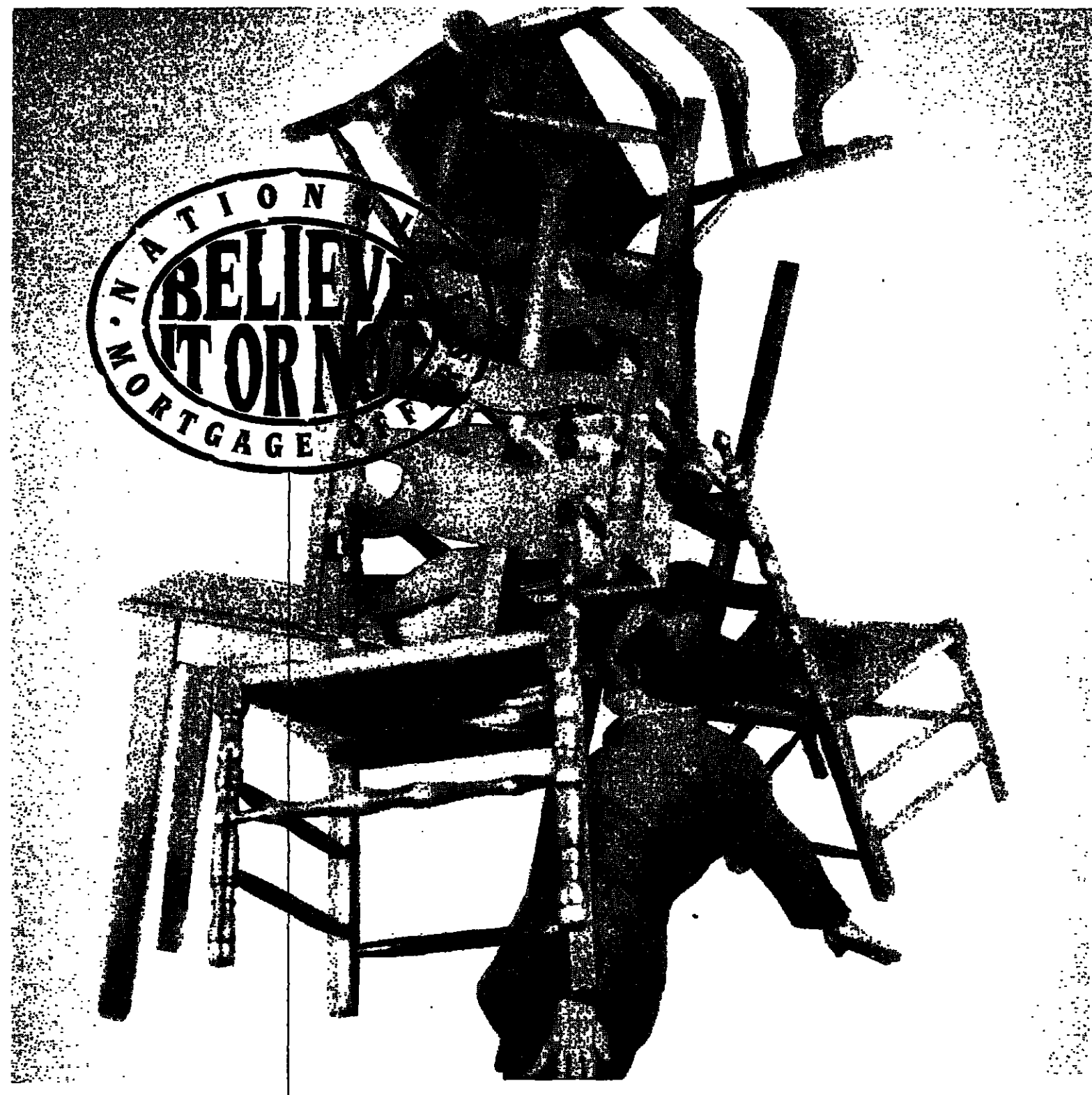
Dushanbe (Reuters) — A mutinous army commander seeking to oust the government of Tajikistan retreated yesterday from near the capital but rejected an offer of talks with the president.

The rebels, who supported President Imomali Rakhmonov in the 1992 war that brought him to power, are demanding he dismiss his government, which they accuse of being corrupt.

Now camped in a mountain pass 22 miles south of the city, the rebel force – led by Colonel Makhmud Khudoyberdiyev – shied away from confrontation after pro-government troops and tanks blocked their advance. There was no fighting

and so far major bloodshed has been avoided in the week-long mutiny, which risks giving a cruel twist to a civil war that has been simmering for about three years in this former Soviet outpost bordering Afghanistan.

Interfax, quoting informed sources, said Tajik interior ministry forces had been deployed around two rebel-held towns, Kurgan-Tyube in the south and Tursunzade in the west, but talks were continuing "to localise the conflict". Commonwealth of Independent States' peacekeepers in the republic, mostly Russians, were on combat alert but remained neutral, the news agency said.



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## international

## Ogoni villagers sue Shell over spill

SAM OLUKOYA  
Lagos

Villagers in Ogoniland, homeland of the executed Nigerian writer, Ken Saro-Wiwa, are suing Shell for \$4m (£2.6m) damages, claiming that crude oil spillage in the area has deprived them of their livelihoods.

Crude oil from a leaking pipeline belonging to Shell has caused extensive environmental damage in the region. The pipeline, which serves one of Shell's five flow stations in Ogoniland, has been leaking since July 1994.

Last week, leaders of seven affected villages began suing Shell in the high court in Port Harcourt. Shell refuses to pay, arguing that the damage was caused by sabotage.

The long-term accumulation of spilled oil - estimated at half a million barrels - affects seven villages, and is killing trees, crops and fish in the area. In October last year the spilled oil went up in flames, burning several square miles of forest.

Oil spills from Shell pipelines are common in Ogoniland and other parts of the oil-rich Niger delta. Environmentalists, including Greenpeace, claim that most of the spills are due to malfunction of equipment or corrosion of the pipeline. Many of Shell's operations and materials in Nigeria are said to be outdated and in poor condition.

In 1993, the Ogonis, led by Saro-Wiwa, campaigned for compensation from Shell for damage caused by the spills and gas flares. They wanted Shell to clean up the environment, and called for reparations of \$4bn. Six months later, Shell pulled out of the area, where it had operated since 1958. The oil spills have continued.

The company blames this on vandalism and sabotage. It says it cannot ensure the safety of its facilities, even after closing them down.

Since Shell pulled out, the Ogonis have faced repression by the Nigerian government, which fears that other communities in oil-producing areas could disrupt the company's operations. Shell is alleged to have colluded in the repression.

## China dynamite blast kills over 100

TERESA POOLE  
Peking

## Deadly hoard: Huge illegal stockpile in basement shows lack of controls

More than 100 people were killed and 400 injured this week when 10 tons of dynamite stored in the basement of a crowded five-storey apartment building exploded, demolishing an entire street in a southern Chinese town.

The huge blast was the latest in a series of accidents demonstrating general disregard of the dangers of dynamite, despite government attempts to regulate the handling of explosives. In one case a passenger on a packed Peking bus was taking explosives home in his shoulder-bag when they blew up.

Wednesday evening's explosion took place in a suburb of Shaoyang, in central China, about 900 miles south of Peking. Last night's main national television news showed pictures of a 30ft crater where the building had stood. Another 40 homes, some up to 100 yards away, were flattened, the report said. Windows were shattered more than a mile away.

The cause of the explosion, and the reason the dynamite was there in the first place, were still unclear last night. Television news said the blast was the result of excessive heat in the building's basement. But there was widespread local speculation that the blast might have been set intentionally as an act of revenge.

According to the local cable television station, a private businessman living in the building had stored 10 tons of dynamite in the basement after being given it in lieu of money by a cash-strapped debtor. A newspaper quoted local officials as saying the resident was illegally dealing in explosives. But last night's national news blamed unspecified "jobless people" who were illegally manufacturing products with dynamite, without saying what these products might be.

There is an active trade in dynamite, mostly illegal, in China because of its use in mining, construction and the manufacture of fireworks and firecrackers.

Shaoyang is in a mining region of Hunan province, but it is also possible that the dynamite dump was connected to illegal manufacturing of firecrackers ahead of the Chinese New Year in a fortnight's time. Firecrackers traditionally play a big role in New Year celebrations, although they have been banned in several major cities, including Peking, for safety reasons.

The Hunan Daily newspaper called the Shaoyang accident "extraordinarily serious" and said provincial experts had joined an investigation, but it is unlikely the full truth will ever be made public.

Television footage showed thousands of soldiers, police and volunteers clawing by hand and with bulldozers through the rubble in an attempt to find survivors. However, no one has been found alive since Thursday afternoon. 20 hours after the disaster. About 10 of the injured have so far died.

China's worst dynamite explosions have usually involved fireworks factories. Two years ago, 800 tons of gunpowder blew up in a private factory in Hebei province, killing 26 people. Accidents with explosives are also common in coal-mining areas, because families often store explosives and detonators in their homes.

Handling of dynamite is often cavalier. In May 12 people were killed when a ton of dynamite stored by a peasant in his village home in Henan province exploded.

Explosions are just one cause of the high death toll in China from avoidable disasters. A succession of fatal fires, high construction site death rates, and heavy loss of life in coal mines has prompted the authorities to try and improve safety regulations and awareness across the country. The latest spate of accidents to feature prominently in the local media has been building collapses, which killed at least 31 people within three weeks at the end of last year.

Industrial safety records remain poor in China. More than 6,650 people died in industrial accidents in the first five months of 1995, and 2,716 were seriously injured, according to official figures. However, the real number is probably much higher. Mine explosions, collapses and other pit accidents kill up to 10,000 miners a year.

## Hunter keeps eagle eye on the remains of the day



Perfect partnership: A Kazakh horseman near Alma-Ata returns from hunting with his eagle yesterday

Photograph: Shamil Zhurnatov/Reuters

## IN BRIEF

## Police hold five in shooting of journalist

**Antalya, Turkey** — Police yesterday arrested six people, including a union leader, suspected of the shooting of Huseyin Demir, a correspondent for the *Hurriyet* newspaper in Istanbul. He was shot and wounded by a gunman on Wednesday. Demir had been receiving anonymous death threats for a month for articles criticising unlicensed construction in this resort city on the Mediterranean and about allegations against a trade union leader. AP

## Lithuanian fall-out inquiry clears N-plant

**Vilnius** — Lithuania's Ignalina nuclear power plant has passed a security inspection and was not the source of radioactive fall-out detected last month over Scandinavia, officials said. The checks were carried out after Norway registered radioactive fall-out for a week in January that could have come from a nuclear reactor abroad. *Reuters*

## Rio wary of video

**Rio de Janeiro** — Film director Spike Lee (right) sought to diminish fears by Brazilian officials that his new Michael Jackson video in a Rio shantytown would damage the city's image. "We're not going to travel for 12 hours to Rio to show poverty when we could show the ghettos of New York," he told *O Globo* newspaper. The video for Jackson's song "They Don't Care About Us" in the north-eastern city of Salvador on 10 February before flying to Rio. *Reuters*



## Unesco launches La Fenice appeal

**Paris** — Unesco launched a worldwide appeal for funds to help rebuild Venice's La Fenice opera house, burnt out for the second time in its history this week. The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation asked for contributions to special accounts at Chase Manhattan Bank in New York, Société Générale in Paris or Banca di Roma in Rome. *Reuters*

## Czechs pay tribute to Havlova

**Prague** — Czechs bid farewell yesterday to Olga Havlova, beloved for her struggle alongside her dissident husband Vaclav Havel during Communist rule, and for her charitable work since he became President. Ms Havlova died of cancer last Saturday. AP

## Court orders release of Albanian reporter

**Tirana** — A court decided that an independent journalist working for Koha Jone, the country's biggest daily, should be released from police custody after a week. Altin Hazizaj, 22, was reporting on the eviction of former political prisoners in Tirana but was charged with assaulting police. AP

## Soybeans embarrass ministry men

**Tokyo** — Soybeans rained down on the Ministry of Finance as protesters vented their anger at Japanese government plans to use taxpayers' money to clean up a bad loan mess involving seven mortgage firms. The protest was a twist on a traditional ritual, in which Japanese throw soybeans inside and outside their houses to bring in good luck and drive out evil spirits. *Reuters*

## Peres aims to strike while Likud slips up

PATRICK COCKBURN  
Jerusalem

"Just as I don't think that a bullet should kill democracy, by the same token I don't think that a bullet should be my mandate to govern the country," Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, said in London this week.

In Israel his remarks were taken as a sign that Mr Peres will go for early elections, probably in May. After all, if he felt so strongly that he needed a fresh mandate after the assassination in November of Yitzhak Rabin, his predecessor, why did he not call an election at the time?

The answer is, of course, that Mr Peres and the Labour Party feel that they can win an election now. Polls yesterday showed that Mr Peres would beat Binyamin Netanyahu, the leader of Likud, the main opposition party, by 16 per cent. The right is still badly damaged by the backlash against it after the murder of Mr Rabin.

There are other strong arguments for the government to dissolve the Knesset by the end of the month. Negotiations with Syria in the US appear to be going nowhere and can only damage Mr Peres and Labour. Giving up the Golan is unpopular with the Israeli electorate, and Mr Netanyahu would love to fight an election on the issue of peace with Syria rather than peace with the Palestinians.

A sea-change in Israeli politics in the last three months is seen in the sudden popularity of the Oslo accords. Voters support them by 59 per cent, with 24 per cent opposed. Six months ago Israeli voters were evenly split. Support for Oslo may increase further if Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, persuades the Palestinian National Council, the Palestinian parliament-in-exile, to revoke the clauses in the Palestinian charter calling for the destruction of Israel. If this happens in April, the Labour campaign will get a further boost.

All this leaves Mr Netanyahu and Likud in desperate trouble. Last year he played successfully on Israeli security fears in the

wake of a series of suicide bombings; he raised the political temperature, only to see his strategy end in disaster when Mr Rabin was assassinated. Leah Rabin, the widow of the murdered prime minister, said she would sooner shake Mr Arafat's hand than Mr Netanyahu's.

The obvious course for Likud is to change its policy and accept Oslo. Earlier this week Ronnie Milo, the powerful Likud mayor of Tel Aviv, said bluntly: "... the time has come to accept (the Oslo accords) and hold negotiations with the PLO and with Yasser Arafat." Probably Mr Netanyahu would like nothing better, but if he suddenly embraces Oslo he will be

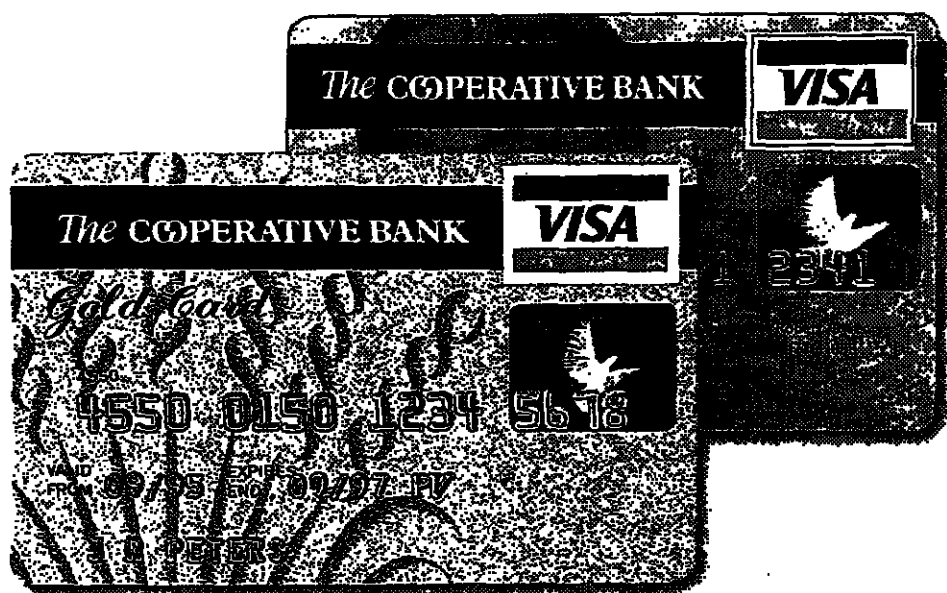


Netanyahu: Suffering from backlash against the right

denounced by diehards like Benny Begin, the son of the former prime minister, as an opportunist and a hypocrite. A change of front now might do him more harm than good.

With Labour in such a strong position, why are so many of its members nervous? On the four previous occasions Mr Peres has led Labour into an election, he has failed to win. Many Israeli voters find him slippery and Machiavellian. This is why he was replaced by Mr Rabin for the 1992 election. It will surely be difficult even for Mr Peres to lose against a candidate as badly damaged as Mr Netanyahu. But Labour might lose the Knesset, because this year, for the first time, Israelis vote separately for prime minister and parliament.

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South Africa's appearance in the African Cup of Nations final today marks another sporting milestone for a nation and a continent, writes **Jim White**

# Out of Africa and into Europe

Nelson Mandela is gathering quite a collection of kit donated by the captains of South Africa's sporting teams. First there was Francois Pienaar's Springbok shirt he wore to present the Rugby World Cup last June. Then there was Hansie Cronje's cricket blazer, donned when he turned up to watch his last thrash England last month. And, this afternoon, in front of 60,000 people packed up the vertiginous stands of the FNB National Bank Stadium in Soweto, the very arena that hosted his first rally after he was released from prison in 1990, the President will take his seat for the final of the African Cup of Nations, dressed in Neil Tovey's football top.

An over-excited mélange of green and yellow stripes criss-crossed with grey flares and apparently designed by a drug-crazed five-year-old, the shirt is not something the sartorially understated but stylish Mandela might have chosen himself. But, as always with Nelson and his kit, it is not design that counts, it is the symbolism.

Tovey, the South Africans' 34-year-old left back, is one of three whites in the team; of the others, including the substitutes, eight are black and two coloured. Thus, by a happy coincidence, South Africa's football team exactly mirrors the racial make-up of the country. The men who will step out this afternoon to take on Tunisia in the final of Africa's most prestigious sporting tournament are the perfect ambassadors for Mandela's new rainbow nation, of South Africa on the march.

Thirty-five years ago, Walter Winterbottom, the former England manager, famously predicted that an African nation would win the World Cup before the end of the century. There is only one more chance for him to be proved prophetic, in France in 1998, when five African countries (as many as will come from South America) will qualify. Judgingly some of the problems surrounding the African Cup of Nations, however, Germany, Brazil and Italy will not have much to fear come the big one. Although Mandela's presence in the vast crowd today will add a gloss of statesmanship to the final of the competition, its qualifying stages were beset by the kind of disaster, corruption and political interference that make you wonder how any of the teams managed to get to South Africa for the tournament.

Of the 45 countries that entered the early stages two years ago, 11 withdrew without completing their matches. For most it was a matter of finance: their national football associations simply could not afford to transport teams to away matches. For others it was bad organisation. Indeed, Mandela only got the chance to get his kit on because preparations in the original host nation, Kenya, were so dogged by maladminis-

tration, under-funding and internecine feuding that it had to pull out, leaving South Africa to step in.

Perhaps the most telling absentee from the competition is Nigeria. The reigning champions – easily the most talented team on the continent, stuffed with players making handy livings in Europe – approached the tournament as if bent on self-destruction. There were disputes over bonuses, rows between home-based players and exiles, fights over sponsors; a Brazilian coach who trounced \$1m from his contract showed up in the country precisely once and then left to take up a position in the United States. Just as order was being restored to the squad, the country's President, General Sani Abacha, announced his team would not be defending the trophy won in Tunis in 1994. Officially, it was said, he feared for

Mohammed Kallon of Sierra Leone, who has just signed for Inter-Milan and at 15 is the youngest player ever to score an international goal. France and Belgium were the first to wake up to the reservoir of talent. The Marseille team that won the European Cup in 1993 had three key African-born players Marcel Desailly, Basile Boli and Abedi Pele.

In England, we were slow to appreciate the potential. It's a gap in perception that we still suffer from, dismissing Africans with a prejudice and cliché that still lingers. "And you have to say," said Archie McPherson, commenting for the satellite channel Eurosport on the African Nations Cup semi-final earlier this week, "that Zambia have paid for their defensive naivety." It is an odd belief that African players cannot defend since the first black professional in this country was an African: Albert Johan-

organised a shirt sponsorship deal. He did not get to achieve the romantic conclusion it deserved: Liberia were on the first plane home, knocked out immediately. No doubt Weah picked up the tab.

Not so the South Africans, who have grown in confidence as they have progressed through the tournament to the final itself, carried by a unstoppable wave of emotional support.

In South Africa they know the value of sport, the way it can define a nation, identify it in the eyes of the world. During the apartheid years, whites sought that identity within the old, European order by excelling at rugby and cricket. Football was dismissed as the black man's game. But now, those racial divisions are being shown not to matter: even in a tournament that locks the nation into the black continent to the north, even in a tournament which, when it began, drew pitifully small crowds, all that is important is that the new South Africa triumphs. Thus, although the average white schoolboy in Cape Town would struggle to name two players in the national football team (he would, thanks to the satellite channel M-Net, which shows live football from England, have no problem telling you all of Manchester United's), there will be thousands of white faces in the crowd this afternoon, and a million more ennobled in front of their television sets. Once more, sport has united the new nation.

Indeed, if Walter Winterbottom is to be proved right and one day an African holds aloft the World Cup, everything suggests he will be from South Africa. Although slap-dash and underfunded compared with its cricket and rugby establishments, the country has a footballing infrastructure that is the envy of the continent. It boasts thriving leagues, good coaches, increasing levels of sponsorship, and, in Orlando Pirates, who last month won the African Champions Cup, the best club side in Africa.

They also have a vast pool of talent, an education system that prizes prowess at games and an extraordinary cross-racial craving for the country to prove itself on the world sporting stage. That desire will be manifest this afternoon when 60,000 people will create an atmosphere the like of which the canny and experienced Tunisians will never have experienced.

But best of all, they have, rumour has it, the promise (delivered in person to Mandela by Joao Havelange, president of Fifa) of hosting the 2006 World Cup itself, thus becoming the first African nation to enjoy home advantage in the tournament.

It won't be easy, but if Mandela is still around to slip on whatever gaudy arrangement of kit his players will be wearing, they have a good-luck charm like no other: since he became President, the great shirt enthusiast has never seen his country lose at anything.

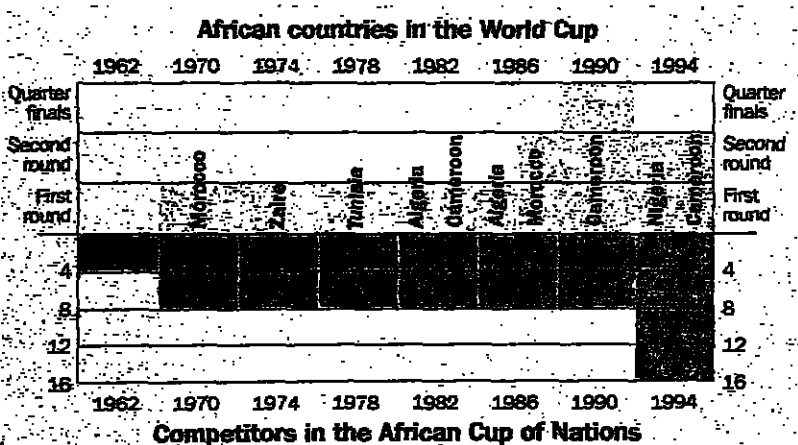
Thirty-five years ago, Walter Winterbottom famously predicted that an African nation would win the World Cup before the end of the century

the Super Eagles' safety. But everyone knew he had a fit of pique because Nelson Mandela had pressed for sanctions against his country following the execution of the author and political opponent Ken Saro-Wiwa. By withdrawing, Nigeria incurred a four-year ban from Fifa, the world football governing body, which will keep the most powerful Africans out of the 1998 World Cup.

And yet, out of this farrago known as African football have emerged some of the finest players in the world. Mad on the game, groomed on poor surfaces which can only be surmounted by application of skill, and with few distractions to keep them from endless hours of practice has been a production. About 350 Africans are playing professional football in Europe. The latest arrival is

seen of Leeds. By coincidence, the club's present manager, Howard Wilkinson, has been something of a proselytiser for Africa, leading the way by signing Phil Masinga and Lucas Radebe of South Africa, and his star striker, Anthony Yeboah, of Ghana.

But it takes more than individuals triumphing in Europe to make a successful national team. Nowhere have the frustrations of being an African genius in exile been more manifest than in the George Weah of AC Milan, currently the best footballer in the world. A Liberian, Weah returned to his war-savaged country from Italy last month, to direct preparations for the African Nations Cup personally. Spending thousands of pounds of his own money, he settled debts, paid for team travel, even



## Top players in African football

George Weah, Liberia and Milan, Italy



Finidi George, Nigeria and Ajax, Holland



Nwankwo Kanu, Nigeria and Ajax, Holland



Anthony Yeboah, Ghana and Leeds Utd, England

# Jo Brand's week

It's strange that news items, like buses, seem to come in threes, thus ensuring it is kept in the news for longer than it would normally be. In some cases it is a good thing because it emphasises a problem that needs to be dealt with. Stalking, for example. It is very difficult for women to feel safe, after it was revealed that a woman under police protection was raped during the day at home. What hope then for the rest of womanhood suffering from this problem and not receiving "protection"? Money, in the case of famous people, seems to be a consideration. Monica Seles, who has already been stabbed on court, received a death threat whilst playing in Australia. Or rather she didn't – it was kept from her because tournament organisers were worried she would throw a wobbler and pull out of the rest of her games. Oh how very reassuring. Sorry about the knife wounds, Monica, but we've made a picket.



Don't look behind you, Monica!

It was sad to see La Fenice opera house in Venice go up in flames. Ironic, too, with the amount of water available. I visited Venice last summer and my enduring memory is the smell, a dank aroma that gets everywhere. Although opera has become more popular thanks to Raviotti and the Fiddle, it still does seem to be the preserve of the elite. Also it is difficult to find lots of good times as the operatic technique of telling the story seems to involve the main characters talking to each other irritably in song. The plots are very thin indeed. *Costi Fan Tutte* by Mozart, for example, involves two fiancés

leaving their women and coming back two seconds later disguised as Albanians with false moustaches. The women don't seem to notice. I think not. If I have revealed myself as a philistine, so be it. At least I sing along to some adverts.

The Americans continue to depress me in so many ways. The BBC2 documentary *Under The Sun* this week followed two five-year-old girls and their hideous relatives as they competed in a pageant to win a crown as the most precocious caterwaulers in the deep south. It was a paedophiles' delight and something which should be strongly resisted over here. Shirley Temple has a lot to answer for.

Paul McCartney has just opened his "Fame" school in Liverpool and let's just hope it doesn't become too much like the American telly programme. All those teenagers leaping and pirouetting around the corridors really got on my nerves. Apparently, the restaurant there is vegetarian, so some enterprising bloke has set up a café nearby ready to dispense sausages and the like to the willing carnivores. Still, at least if the pupils of the Fame school are existing on beans and pulses, hopefully they'll be too weak to scream "Fame..." we're gonna live for ever!" in anyone's earholes.

A health authority has admitted trying to remove patients from waiting lists to meet a target of having nobody queueing for more than 12 months. Oh, so that's how the Patients' Charter works, then. I think this target business is getting out of hand. If you set targets that can't be achieved honestly, it is human nature to cheat. When I was younger, the police in my local area had obviously set themselves targets for traffic offences and two policemen used to sit outside a dairy which was next to a zebra crossing. As the milk floats came out at about five miles an hour, cars would illegally overtake them at the zebra crossing, filling the coppers' quotas within a very short time. I'm not saying all police or all people in the health service are like this. If health authorities carry on like this, the waiting lists will soon look very healthy, because many of the patients will have died off on trolleys in casualty.

Yet another controversial first appears on our televisions this week. It is two men kissing and it is an attempt by Peugeot to sell cars. Peugeot insists it is not a homosexual love scene but a man who has dived off a bridge being given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Oh, the tedium of it all. Car ads, it has to be said, are the ones that make you want to put

your boot through the screen. I nearly got a contract out on the Volvo man who yelled "I'm a control freak" after having driven the aforementioned vehicle across a ravine. Volvo drivers don't tackle many ravines on the school run, as far as I know. A decent car is a decent car whether it's driven to the shops, across a vineyard by the smirking, nubile Nicole, or standing on a beach while the perfect couple (all male or whatever) snog to the accompaniment of crashing waves. Will it break down in the middle of nowhere? That's all I need to know.



Not yet cloned, as far as we know

Poor old Prince Philip and the bugger. I have not been bugged as far as I know, but I have had my mobile phone cloned, resulting in some Arab-sounding bloke making 50 calls a day on it. I was on tour at the time and a couple of people who phoned me assumed that I'd struck lucky with some sheik or other. Other people always make my life sound much more exciting than it is.

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### For a golf lover:

Anyone who likes golf will love *The Man Who Inherited a Golf Course*. This superb novel tells the story of Trevor Dickinson who wakes up one morning to find that he is the owner of his very own golf club – fairways, bunkers, clubhouse and all. There's one snag to keep the club he must win a golf match. And he's never played a round of golf in his life. "The scenario is tailor made for Vernon Coleman's slight and amusing anecdotes about country life and pursuits" said the *Sunday Independent*. "Very readable!" said *Golf World*. "Hugely enjoyable in the best tradition of British comic writing" said the *Evening Chronicle*. "The mix of anecdotes and moments of sheer farce make for an absorbing read" said the *Evening Telegraph*. A terrific present for anyone who enjoys golf. Far more fun than another pair of socks or a bottle of alternative.

### For a cat lover:

Feline fans will love *Alice's Diary* which tells of a year in the life of a mixed tabby cat. Alice shows us, with great humour and insight, what it is really like to be a cat. Our files are bursting with letters from readers who love this book. "What a wonderful book, so beautifully written, it was a great pleasure to read" wrote Mrs Y of Essex. "Please send copies of Alice's Diary to the eleven friends on the accompanying list. It is a wonderful book which will give them all great pleasure," wrote Mr R of Lancashire. Alice's Diary is delightfully illustrated throughout. But we warn you: when you see it you may not want to give it away! An absolute must for all cat and animal lovers. Guaranteed to give more joy and laughter than almost any other present you can choose.

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## Mr Murdoch thinks the game is in the bag: it isn't

Imagine living rooms where top sport is banished without choice. No excitement in May when the Cup Final comes round. No cries of anguish over Wimbledon finals in July. No roars of encouragement to the favourite in the National. The sound of leather on willow at Lords is absent, the chance to see the Linford Christie of the future denied.

To generations brought up on the voices which have defined our sports: Richie Benaud and John Arlott on cricket, Dan Maskell on tennis, Bill McLaren on rugby, such a prospect may seem inconceivable. To the sports-averse it may seem like heaven. But such a sports blackout in millions of homes could easily happen.

Satellite broadcasters, particularly Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB, are plundering their deep pockets to buy exclusive rights to the best of British sport. Those who cannot afford to subscribe to Sky or who do not have access to cable could soon be left to view only second-rate competition provided by the traditional broadcasters.

We are moving away from the old world of television sport. We cannot and should not halt the shift. In the old world spectators were relatively poorly served by unimaginative coverage provided by the relatively complacent BBC and ITV. The sums these terrestrial broadcasters paid for the rights to show sports like football were not enough to allow those running the sports to invest in new facilities or foreign talent.

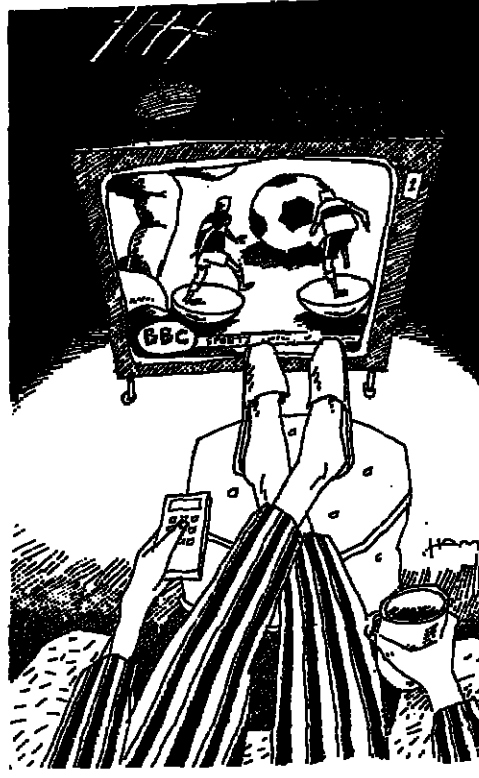
In the world we are moving into everyone has more choice, at least in theory. The emergence of digital television, combined with satellite and cable should create many more channels for

sport. So spectators should be better catered for with more channels to choose between, offering more professional coverage. The competition between these new broadcasters should mean there is more money to be invested in the sports. This is already happening. BSkyB is offering huge sums to acquire the rights to show sports like football. Some of that money has been ploughed back into the foreign stars who grace the Premiership and the vastly improved stadiums they play in.

All well and good but before we get to the promised land of the new world of digital television there is a large obstacle to overcome: the growing power of Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB. It is trying to buy up a captive audience by buying up the sports people like watching. That means excluding sports fans who cannot afford a Sky subscription.

It doesn't seem right. Public concern is so great that it seems finally to have convinced a majority of MPs to curb Mr Murdoch. Next week, a backbench amendment to the Broadcasting Bill will be debated, backed by MPs drawn from all parties. It would make it illegal for satellite and cable broadcasters to secure exclusive rights to the "crown jewels" of sport: the Olympics, the World Cup, FA Cup and Scottish FA Cup finals, domestic Test matches, Wimbledon, the Grand National and the Derby.

The Government has failed to understand public fears for these events. Yesterday's announcement by Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary - that she does not wish to curb Sky's sporting acquisitions - was a



mistake. Mrs Bottomley must appreciate that nine-tenths of the population do not have satellite television. Many of these viewers would feel justifiably aggrieved at being deprived of access to great national sporting events. Something must be done to make sure everyone has an opportunity to watch them.

Mrs Bottomley contends that interfering with the television contracts negotiated by sporting bodies could do more harm than good to sport. Sky has shaken up the cosy BBC/ITV duopoly, expanded sports coverage and made available vast sums which are being pumped into new stadiums and better facilities.

None of the major sporting bodies would want to go back to the old pre-Sky days when they had little option other than to take what was offered by the BBC or ITV.

Yet there are also dangers in taking Mr Murdoch's money, as Rugby league is finding out. Rugby league - whose matches were bought up by Rupert Murdoch for BSkyB - has had to switch its matches from winter to the summer to fit in with Sky's requirements. As a sport it has been changed dramatically to suit television. If the venture does not work out, if viewers don't like the programmes, rugby league will be dumped as brutally as an unpopular sitcom.

Perhaps for that reason the International Olympic Committee this week turned down Sky's bid to cover the Olympics from 2002 to 2008 in favour of a lower joint offer from Europe's public broadcasters. The IOC judged that the bigger audience secured by groups such as the BBC would best achieve its ends - the promotion of

amateurism, internationalism and less well-known sports.

BSkyB almost collapsed soon after its launch. Yet its power is now such that it needs to be checked. This does not simply mean protecting the "crown jewels". That will suffice as a short-term measure. The long-term goal must be to create a more open and competitive market in bidding for television rights to sports. There is a strong argument for referring his television interests immediately to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, which would examine how Sky controls access to satellite capacity, how it controls billing systems for customers and is able to make deals with programme suppliers which shut out other broadcasters.

Another move would be to insist that rights to sports events are "unbundled" so that if BSkyB has the rights to live coverage, terrestrial broadcasters have to be able to show highlights and repeats.

Ways must be found to enable cable companies to compete on a level playing field with Sky, which at the moment dictates the terms on which film and sport programming is supplied to cable operators. The BBC must also think about the possibility of entering the subscription television market. This seems to be the only way in which it will be able to battle with Sky in the bidding to cover big events.

Whatever the solutions - regulation first, followed by increased competition would be the best way forward - Mrs Bottomley's strategy of doing nothing is untenable. It is time to take on Mr Murdoch.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Operatic costs, funding and audiences

From Mr Richard Searle  
Sir: With regard to your leading article "Making opera pay its way" (1 February), you suggest that Raymond Gubbay's Albert Hall venture will attract those intolerant of the "soaring prices, social grandeur (and) long hours" at Covent Garden. I would take issue with each of these.

Both the Royal Opera and English National Opera sell seats in the upper part of the theatre at less than the cost of entry to a West End cinema. These areas of the theatre are favoured by many dedicated opera-goers and the atmosphere is open and friendly: "social grandeur" and the corporate junket brigade may be found elsewhere. As for "long hours", surely Mr Gubbay is not presenting an abridged version of the already short *La Bohème*?

Yours faithfully,  
RICHARD SEARLE  
London, SW15

From Professor Arthur Jacobs  
Sir: Those of us who write

about and teach the history of music are grateful for your editorial revelation that "opera started as a commercial mass entertainment in central Europe's concert halls".

Hitherto we have traced opera's origins to early 17th-century Florence and its "essentially courtly entertainments in the form of the then fashionable pastiche... for the delectation of aristocratic spectators" (*Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, current edition).

We have chronicled the long dependence of operatic performance on financial subsidy from aristocratic, state or municipal sources. Somehow we missed its genesis in the concert hall, whether in central Europe or elsewhere, and failed to identify it as a mass entertainment before the 19th century.

Yours faithfully,  
ARTHUR JACOBS  
Oxford  
The writer is the editor of the 'Penguin Dictionary of Music'.

From Mr Paul Freeman  
Sir: In the debate about the funding of opera, nobody seems to have suggested television as a potential source of revenue. There are occasional live broadcasts made by the BBC and Channel 4, and usually a couple of recordings are shown at Christmas, but if the existing and potential popularity of opera are as good as it is supposed, then surely this is an area that should be exploited.

Television broadcasts of live or recorded performances would serve existing demand for opera, increase its popularity, help bring more people to live opera of all scales from amateur to international, and provide a considerable source of revenue.

If one night from each production put on at Covent Garden were to be broadcast live, just think of the differences that would be made in these areas.

Yours faithfully,  
PAUL FREEMAN  
Wotton under Edge,  
Gloucestershire

### How ITV manages to agree

From Mr Leslie Hill

Sir: Matthew Horsman raises some timely and interesting points about ITV (Media, 30 January). However, I was surprised by his comment that the companies "fight among themselves". Given that 11 separate companies run one channel, it is quite remarkable that there is agreement about so much and that the channel is managed so effectively.

What was missing from his analysis of the direction in which the market place is going was any mention of one of ITV's most fundamental features - provision of regional services across the nation. It is ITV's regional character that distinguishes it from its competitors and which, despite changes in ownership, remains and must continue to remain, the cornerstone of the channel.

The challenge facing us is to sustain, and capitalise on, our great regional strengths while exploring ways of exploiting new commercial opportunities. In the area of digital terrestrial

television, for example, the British television industry is working to advance digital television swiftly. Both in Europe and the UK, the relevant companies and organisations are thrashing out the technical specifications, with a view to getting a transmission infrastructure built by the end of 1997 and digital receivers in the market by early 1998.

The ITV companies are working together on the creation of a transmission network on a regional basis. We are also examining what ITV's new digital programme service might be - over and above the simulcast service we are required to broadcast.

So there is more synchronised activity than first meets the eye. ITV is Europe's most popular channel. We intend keeping it that way.

Yours faithfully,  
LESLIE HILL  
Chairman  
ITV  
London, WC1  
2 February

### Lottery is all above board

From Mr David Sieff

Sir: Your leader "Bringing the lottery bigwigs to book" (2 February) suggests the House of Commons had nothing to do with setting up the bodies tasked with distributing the lottery money to good causes. In fact, the National Lottery Charities Board was set up by the same legislation which established the lottery. It was fully debated in Parliament and secured all-party consent.

The National Lottery Charities Board wishes to be transparent and accountable. So far, we have made 2,400 grants. The media, including the *Independent*, were sent full details and analyses of each of these grants and our first grants. Your paper covered our first grant announcements in great detail and in a leader the following morning (24 October 1995) said that the awards, and I quote, "makes you proud to live in a country where so many are trying to do so much for so many".

Our board conducted a massive consultation exercise with the voluntary sector in the earlier part of last year. Full details of all our policies and our grants were made public. Given the almost unprecedented media coverage, I am astonished you should claim our workings are mysterious.

To state that the board is "stuffed with bankers, politicians and businessmen" is untrue. Our board members have long and valuable experience of the charity and voluntary sectors.

Yours faithfully,  
DAVID SIEFF  
Chairman  
National Lottery  
Charities Board  
London, WC2

### Restoration of ruined abbeys

From Ms Catherine Candlish

Sir: Your correspondent Mrs M. J. Fox (Letters, 1 February) wishes to have just one ruined abbey rebuilt. Obviously she is not aware that this was done years ago on the Scottish island of Iona.

Should Mrs Fox go there she will find no museum piece, however, such as might be put in place by Millennium funds; nor will she step back in time. Rather she will find a place of exquisite craftsmanship housing a forward-thinking, practical group of ecumenical Christians, whose feet are firmly on the ground.

The welcome she receives may be more than she bargains for, and the lessons she learns may be more than historical.

Yours sincerely,  
CATHERINE CANDLISH  
St Andrews, Fife

From Mr Dick Jones

Sir: Mrs M. J. Fox on the restoration of ruined abbeys and monasteries says that it was the ancestor of Prince Charles who initiated their destruction.

The three children of Henry VIII to whom she refers, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth I, all died childless. On the death of Elizabeth, the Crown passed to James I and VI of Scotland, a descendant of Margaret, Henry VIII's eldest sister.

Yours etc,  
DICK JONES  
Cambridge

### Sensitive ways to deal with death

From Mr Roy J. Ward

Sir: I read your leading article "Say goodbye to the British way of death" (31 January) following the funeral of my 28-year-old son earlier in the day. We all deplore the impersonal crematoria package, but it need not be so.

Our son was no "public figure", but he had a glorious day of celebration, music, memory and deep sadness that recognised both Christian and humanistic spirituality, which was highly personal about our son but did not ignore the existential questions which death inevitably raises.

The High Street undertakers were sensitive and accommodating to our various requests

and patiently waited with us for 40 minutes at the packed church and the further hour we spent at the graveside.

Similarly, the Anglican priest was sensitive to our varied views and needs in planning the funeral, respecting our son's non-Christian beliefs while not losing sight of the needs of the many bereaved, Christian and non-Christian, to be ministered to.

I agree with your leader that there is a need for "access to a wide variety of options" but the wish to hand it all over to someone else still runs the risk of a kind of detachment from grief which is often the essence of the British way of death.

Yours sincerely,  
ROY WARD  
London, SE20  
2 February

### Prison staff cuts

From Mr David Evans

Sir: To put the blame for staff cuts in the prison service at the door of the Prison Officers' Association (Letters, 30 January) beggars belief. Mark Leech's references to levels of staff who work with prisoners and the level of pay suggests a poor understanding of the facts.

As to the Scottish model, the prison service in Scotland are also cutting staff.

Mr Leech may be the only person in the penal field who supports the Home Secretary's belief that the prison service is overstuffed. He contradicts countless inquiry reports including Woolf and Learmont which contain recommendations that

imply staffing increases.

Recent advice sent to governors on reducing costs makes it clear that offender programmes that are known to reduce re-offending are to be cut. Many establishments are proposing to axe their entire probation and education units.

The current budget cuts, combined with the prison population explosion, will result in prisoners spending more time in their cells, and less time on programmes that challenge offending behaviour. That has serious repercussions for the future.

Yours,  
DAVID EVANS  
General Secretary  
Prison Officers' Association  
London, N9  
1 February

### VAT returns

From Mr Mark Blackman

Sir: Am I correct in remembering that VAT was increased from 15 per cent to the current 17.5 per cent to pay for transitional relief as the poll tax was replaced by the council tax?

Southwark Council informs

us that as this relief is being withdrawn, it may have to increase some of its council tax charges by up to 90 per cent. Can we expect to hear soon from the Government that VAT will return back to its old rate?

Yours faithfully,  
MARK BLACKMAN  
London, SE5



Bader meeting German pilots after his capture in northern France

Mike Pollard

### Bader: shot down or collided?

From Mr John T. Williams

Sir: As an aside to Richard Smith's article relating to the discovery of Douglas Bader's aircraft (Spitfire W3185) (29 January), it is interesting to note that the photograph showing Bader with Luftwaffe pilots includes "Adolf Galland", commanding officer of JG26 (a pilot from this unit may well have brought down Bader's aircraft). Galland was given a severe reprimand for "entertaining" the British pilot at the Geschwader headquarters.

Bader was shot down on 9 August 1941, while leading his Wing during a bomber escort to Bethune. Having baled out minus his right artificial leg, a signal was received from the Germans asking that a replacement leg could be dropped. The RAF decided to include the

task in a normal raid. On 18 August 1941, a Bristol Blenheim of No 18 squadron took off from RAF Manston in Kent. The Blenheim made the drop en-route to its primary target. Regards,

JOHN T. WILLIAMS  
Co-Secretary, RAF Air Force  
Manston History Club  
Ramsgate, Kent

From Mr R. G. Gregory  
Sir: Wing Commander Douglas Bader was not shot down over St Omer on 9 August 1941, neither did he unstrap his right leg in order to get clear of his tail-less aircraft.

Paul Brickhill's biography of Bader relates that, having dispatched the centre two of a formation of six Bf109s from astern, Bader used his overtaking speed to turn hard right

to pass between the two on that side and "in sheer bravado, he held course to do so" - and didn't! There was a collision which left Bader's aircraft minus the complete rear fuselage and tail, presumably as a result of it being sliced off by the propeller of the rear-most 109.

The tail-less, but by no means engine-less, projectile which Bader's Spitfire had now become, went down very fast and, quite lacking any control, he decided to get out. In this he was helped to a degree by the high-speed airflow but found himself trapped by his right tin leg, the same wind pressure making it quite impossible for him to do anything constructive "till the steel and leather snapped".

Yours faithfully,  
R. G. GREGORY  
Diss, Norfolk

### Literary cubs

From Mr Geoffrey Brogan

Sir: In your obituary of Joseph Brodsky (30 January), you state: "In 1987, Joseph Brodsky, then 47, became the youngest person ever to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature." This is incorrect. In 1957, Albert Camus received the Nobel Literature Prize at the age of 44.

Yours sincerely,  
GEOFFREY BROGAN  
Southport, Merseyside

### Four-foot fault

From Mr T. C. Micklem

Sir: Not all the dinosaur-contemporary quadruped footprints from Corncockle quarry (letter, 31 January) were sent to

Oxford. There is a fine example in Dumfries Museum.

Yours faithfully,  
T. C. MICKLEM  
Pocklington,  
Yorkshire  
31 January

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

(Fax: 0171-293 2856; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

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## DAVID AARONOVITCH

### Water into urine

I'd only had one glass, so you can't blame the drink. Jeremy Paxman's voice introduced Thursday's *Newsnight* over familiar live pictures of bored, ill-dressed men and women shuffling around a large gymnasium. It was the evening of the Hemsworth by-election. Later, some cub reporter would appear telling us that Labour were "looking happy" (bad word, handsomely), or the Tories seemed "relaxed" (bad word, their deposit).

There they were, Britain's Most Boring Canvassers, awaiting a result that everyone already knew. Some bloke was being grilled - I temporarily lost the thread.

It was only when Jeremy interrupted the fat chap on screen with "a man's just fallen down behind you, now what's that about?" that I woke up. Who had gone down? Had the new MP died already? (Was this a record?) Had someone set fire to the Liberal Democrat?

Then I twigged. We weren't in Hemsworth at all, we were in Telford. The scene was an evangelical service. And the interviewee wasn't the editor of the *Hemsworth Argus* filling empty airtime, but an American pastor defending millennialist religious practice (speaking in tongues, barking like dogs, throwing away other people's crutches), against attack from the mainstream church.

So those in shot were Christ's New Vanguard, experiencing ecstasy. Only they were experiencing it extremely undramatically. True, looking closely at the crowd behind the complacent priest I glimpsed an old dear going down on one knee and making a face. Then getting up again. If the Spirit was entering her, I thought, it had come out the other side very quickly.

It wasn't the first time I had witnessed the dire spectacle of white English people carried away by spirituality. I'd seen other pictures of evangelicals visited by the Lord. They shook a bit, sat down suddenly and got up again, shut their eyes and nervously shouted, "I'm here, Lord." Everything they did possessed the same dignity and physical grace that you see when people fall off buses, or

get trapped in revolving doors. Surely if God wanted to reveal himself to us he would make a better, more beautiful show of it? The singing would be sublime, the body would shine electric, the eyes would stream with fervour and inspiration. It would have to seduce miraculously. But the Toronto Blessing as seen in Telford was no miraculous. Instead of turning water into wine, the English faithful manage the unastonishing trick of transforming water into urine. Anybody can do it, but only the demented insist on telling everyone.

Contrast this wobbling incypling with the services inside black Pentecostal churches. Magnificent singing, rhythmic clapping and smart clothes. You can be completely irreverent and feel something inside you respond. So why is this?

No - I'm not falling for ever the mildest form of "they've got natural rhythm". I see the same phenomenon in other walks of life. At English football matches most of the singing is off-key. Many fans even chant out of tune, fizzling out mid-explosive. Contrast this with, say, Brazilian supporters, and their terrace sambas.

Or, to take a topical example, examine Mr Scargill's new radical party, Socialist Labour. Where were the red banners the six-foot high portraits of Karl, Vladimir and Arthur? The founding marked by 10,000-strong rally, addressed by fraternal delegates from the struggling masses of 10 continents? Did Agitprop theatre transform the icy streets of Hemsworth into a perpetual celebration of working-class political action? No. Arthur and Brenda, his candidate, sat all day in an old shop phoning people up. That's it.

I know the culprit. What's at work here is that damned English self-consciousness. It's that fear of ridicule, of looking silly, which leads to an incapacity to throw oneself into the song, the dance, the party or the politics. Unless you are completely drunk, in which case there is absolution. In England it is not just the best who lack all conviction. Even the worst do.

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

When I am portrayed as a saint I say, 'How ridiculous.' When I am painted as a black-hearted villain, I say, 'That's not the wide picture either' - Terry Waite, former *Church envoy* and *Bosnia hostage*

The Conservative Party has got rid of its eccentricities and is taken over by PR and advertising people. The Labour Party is losing its mavericks and finding a sullen army among the politically correct. In both parties a fatal spirit of obedience is taking over - John Mortimer, *playwright*

I don't need servants, I just need peace - Phil Collins, *pop star*, after going into self-imposed exile in Switzerland

Children are abused in various ways as morality and reason are thrown out of the window in pursuit of selfish adult ends - Nelson Mandela, *urging the world to punish the abuse of children in war*

I am like the Duchess of York. Can't afford to carry on. Which of us should be saved for the nation? - Austin Mitchell, *Labour MP*

Their cumulative incompetence caused Hell on Earth. They have shown no remorse - Ron Lipsius, *King's Cross fire victim*, in *London Transport*

Parliament is about as sexy as a late afternoon in a men's club in Pall Mall - George Walden, *Tory MP*

مكتبة من الأناضول

INSIDE

They still talk about the road, and dementedly w car. For every immobiliser d inconvenience and many mo

I've been lock the road, and dementedly w car. For every immobiliser d inconvenience and many mo

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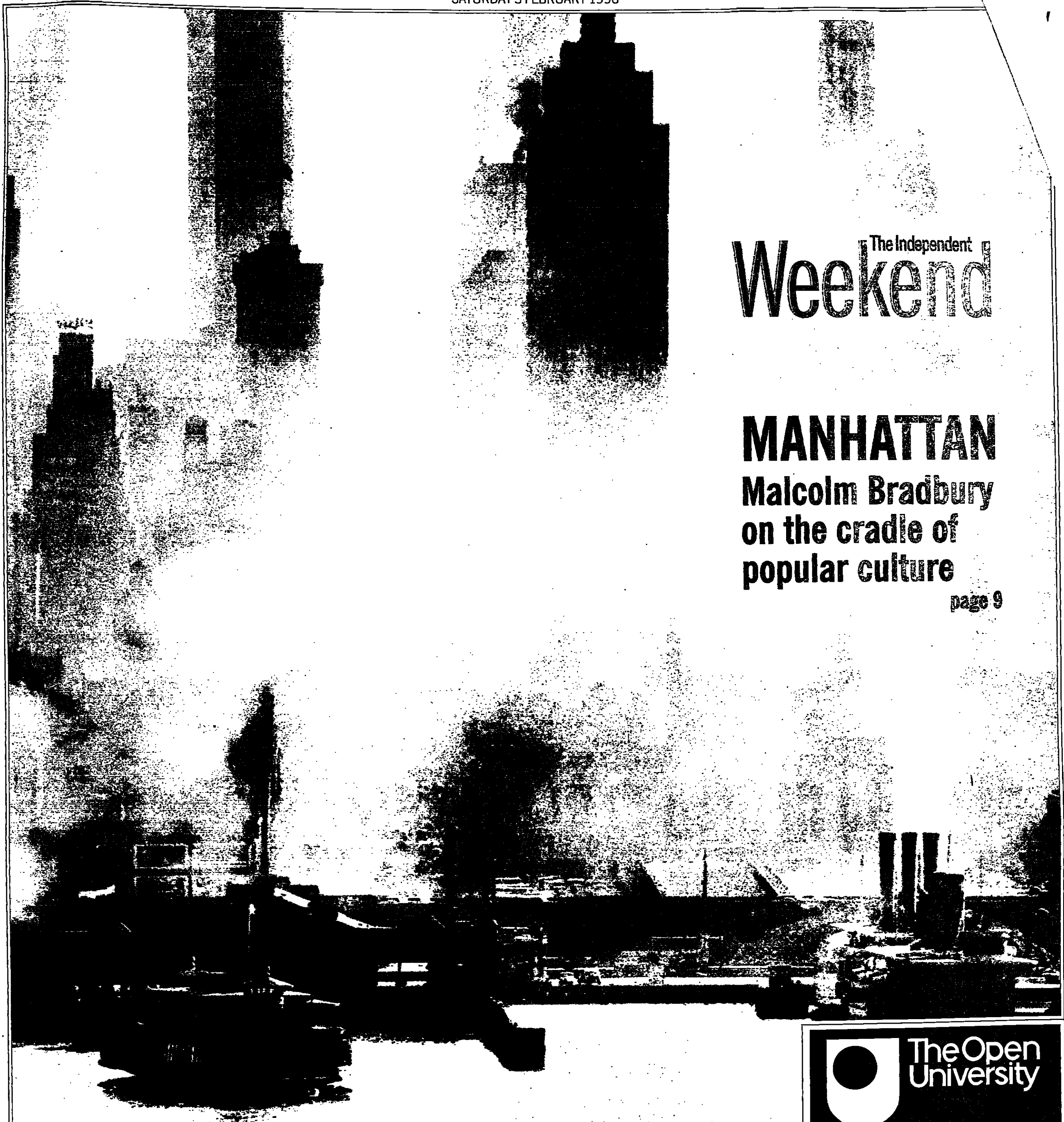


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# The Independent Weekend

## MANHATTAN

Malcolm Bradbury  
on the cradle of  
popular culture

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**3** They still talk about it, the night that David Alden put the boot into Tchaikovsky, the night of 'The Cossack Chainstore Massacre'. The booing started early. By the close, even the critics had aligned themselves into vociferous factions

**7** 'I suppose I'm old-fashioned,' says the funny-man turned theatre director Patrick Marber. 'I serve the text and try not to be too flash. I don't like anything flash. I don't like flash cars, flash people. I don't want to be a flash director'

**19** I've been locked out, immobilised on the road, and had the alarm squawk dementedly while I've been in my car. For every thief that an alarm or immobiliser deters, I bet it inconveniences at least 100 owners, and many more innocent neighbours

**20** Mention badgers to any dairy farmer in our area, and his eyeballs start to rotate. Never mind what vets or scientists may tell him: he is certain that badgers transmit TB to his cows. He is also sure that the law should be changed so they can be culled

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## picture story



The bus queue – senior citizens and impatient commuters wait for a glimmer of double-decker in a sea of freezing rush-hour smog. It could only be Monday morning

## THE GREAT BRITISH QUEUE



Waiting for the post-office to open: "It's some people's way of integrating," says one of those lining up for their giro with stoical pride. "Being in a queue makes for less loneliness, doesn't it?"



Britons will queue for anything, which may explain the line of people waiting to see John and Norma Major leaving *Mack and Mabel* at the Piccadilly Theatre

Pictures by Philip Meech



Dancing shoes: according to one clubber here, "The queue is part of the evening – if you don't have to wait, it isn't worth it"



As George Mikes once wrote: "An Englishman, even if he is alone, forms an orderly queue of one." From Madame Tussaud's to all-night raves, from station platforms to Lottery counters, Britain remains one nation joined by a culture of wait-your-turn

## THIS WEEKEND WHY NOT...

BY DAVID BENEDICT

EAT  
At Rascasse  
in Leeds

The set-up is sleek, with blond wood floors, chic metal trim and tables laid with starchily white linen. And the name? Rascasse – the fish the French believe is essential in bouillabaisse. The spicy, aromatic fish soup is certainly worth the brouhaha. Alternatively, sample perfectly cooked cod on a thick bed of puréed peas almost outshone by the accompanying gratin dauphinois. A far cry from dank cod, soggy chips and musty peas. The menu is not entirely pescatorial. Confit of duck is suitably rich, encased in crisp skin, and comes with a heart-stoppingly rich, caustic purée, and dessert-hunters should aim for the pear crumble topped with vanilla ice-cream that could send Häagen-Dazs packing.  
■ Carial Wharf, Water Lane, Leeds (0113-244-6611) Dinner 7-10pm, £25-30. Three-course Sunday lunch 12-2pm £15

JOIN  
The  
Wordsworth  
Winter School

If you thought English poetry was a distinctly parochial affair, then you may be surprised to discover that devotees are coming from as far afield as China, Japan, Norway and the US to attend the 14th annual festival of Lakeland literature. Anyone joining the week-long festivities can expect walks, talks, readings and seminars plus a few excursions thrown in. The focus this year is on *Home at Grasmere* and the two-part *Prelude*, but you don't need to be a Romantic poetry expert to attend all or some of the events, which begin on Sunday. The opportunity to spend time in the museum and Dove Cottage, not to mention seeing the inspirational landscape in the present dramatic weather conditions, should enlighten anyone about Wordsworth's muse.  
■ Dove Cottage, Grasmere, Cumbria (015394-35544). Single events £5; full-week residency £349

WATCH  
Donna  
McPhail

A big night out for Swindon, as the troubleshooting Donna McPhail, blazes into town for one gig only. You'll know her from *hangover Sunday mornings* as the no-nonsense presenter of BBC2's *The Sunday Show*. The hard-hitting, suit-wearing stand-up, one of a select band of British women comics who can always be relied upon to deliver, comes out fighting and never lets up. "Maybe because I'm a woman," she says, "I feel more under pressure. I don't think, 'They're going to hate me. I'm a woman', but I'm incredibly aggressive when I go on. I want people to know that they don't mess with me." Support from the rejuvenated Bill Bailey, aka the bastard son of Whispering Bob Harris, and his surreal cosmic jam.  
■ Swindon Arts Centre (01793 614837) 8pm tonight

VISIT  
The Road  
Racing Show

If you've never understood the appeal of motorbikes, you've obviously never been on a decent one. The pattering performance of a Honda 90 is as far from the thrill of the powerful, state-of-the-art Ducati 916 as dinner with Raymond Blanc is from a pot noodle. Anyone intent on discovering the pleasures of two wheels should rush to this year's bigger and better Road Racing and Superbike show at Alexandra Palace. All the young British stars taking part in the 1996 Grand Prix World Championships are revealing their plans and, alongside newly unveiled bikes from Triumph, BMW, and the hand-crafted Bimotas, there is an auction of race memorabilia today, with proceeds going to Riders for Health, the bikers' section of Save the Children.  
■ Alexandra Palace, London N22 (0181-444 7523) 9am-6pm, ends Sun. Adults £7, children £3

BUY  
A cultured  
pearl

Diamonds, as Shirley Bassey taught us, are for ever, but pearls don't exactly have a sell-by-date. They don't come cheap either, but if you can't be extravagant on Valentine's Day, when can you? The anonymous-card routine is all well and good, but those in search of undying gratitude from a loved one a week on Wednesday should sample the wares of Mikimoto, creators of the cultured pearl. At £30,000 this choker is probably for lottery winners only, but a pair of earrings is £300 and you won't need a second mortgage to buy a pearl-embossed letter opener (£29) or paperweight (£38). Those living in Central London can take advantage of the free, anonymous Valentine's delivery service, but everyone else can purchase by mail order.  
■ 179 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-629 5300)





# The man who invented the opera nasty

Meet David Alden, chainsaw opera producer: a man who treats opera not as bourgeois art for a monied élite but as an agent of upheaval. Edward Seckerson hears how to put the boot into the great composers. Photograph by Glynn Griffiths

An empty space. A commitment to nothing. For some theatre directors, it's a good place to start. For David Alden, it's the only place. In his head at least, Alden needs to arrive in rehearsal with a completely clean slate – just the piece, his performers, and the enticing prospect of endless possibility. A blank canvas. In opera – his chosen medium – that's not so easy. A great many factors conspire against it. And yet, during the 15 years of his extraordinary creative marriage with designer David Fielding, Alden effectively made no compromise. Fielding gave him his empty space, his magic box, his white walls. And Alden inhabited that space, violated it, created his own dreams, his own nightmares, his own Fritz Langian shadows. Order turned to disarray. He defaced the walls, brought in absurdist symbols of time and space, naked light bulbs, clocks and chairs (lots of chairs)... and chainsaws.

Chainsaws? Now there's a word to resonate in the memory of all those who crossed the threshold of English National Opera during the mid-1980s, the so-called "Power House" era. A time for change, audacity, designer opera. And trendy poster campaigns. The audiences didn't come quietly. That was all part of the fun: the resistance. And some shows they loved to hate more than others. Like this one: David Alden's ENO debut, a cut-price, throw-away staging of Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa*. The first "opera nasty" – theatre of cruelty, theatre of anarchy, theatre of blood and thunder.

They still talk about it, the night that Alden put the boot into Tchaikovsky, the night of "The Cossack Chainsaw Massacre" – as it affectionately became known. The booing started in the first 20 minutes. By the close, even the critics had aligned themselves into vociferous factions. The run sold out within days. A *succès de scandale*. That's putting it mildly.

I doubt that Alden and Fielding realised it at the time, but with this one production they had effectively set the agenda for the ENO style of the 1980s: highly physical, confrontational, brutalist, deconstructivist – these were the watchwords. They didn't set out to be shocking or radical, says Alden. Instinct always ruled. Their productions came on strong in a rough, angry, energised kind of way because the chemistry between them dictated that line of attack. Their *Simon Boccanegra* was fiercely elemental. *Bluebeard's Castle* concentrated, claustrophobic, played out in the dark recesses of Bluebeard's soul, where the only points of entry, the only doors, were seen carried on the backs of his previous wives, like crosses to Calvary –

an idea which came out of rehearsals for the revival (a classic example of why no Alden show is ever set in stone).

A *Masked Ball* was, by contrast, a wonderfully elaborate summation of all that Alden and Fielding had achieved together. It wasn't quite the end of their partnership, but it felt like it. Alden is the proud possessor of a broadcast tape where the silence between Verdi's explosive chords at the start of Scene 2 (visions of a petticoated Linda Finnie, as the exiled medium Madame Arvidson, traversing the empty stage with her suitcase) is broken by a dramatic exchange of catcalls. It goes like this: Chord. "This is rubbish." Chord. "Be quiet – some of us are enjoying it." The timing is so perfect as to sound like a set-up. He might have directed it himself, says Alden. And, as he does, you get the feeling that in some strange way he's proud of the reaction, that he takes credit for it.

Alden is a small man with an enormous capacity for theatre – the rhetoric of theatre. Theatre that deals in "unconscious forces, tears, and desires – acting them out on stage, doing forbidden, dangerous, erotic, violent things in public" – those are his words. He's confident, not to say arrogant, about his work. Don't even suggest that it must be soul-destroying constantly to encounter such open hostility. "Soul destroying? I couldn't care less. My soul is way beyond that. My soul is nursed by the work, the preparation, the time spent getting inside the piece, the time spent alone in a room with a couple of singers, a pianist, a conductor – it's very intimate, private, revealing. Of course, at the back of my mind is how an audience will read what we do, how it will impact on them. But by then it's out of my hands."

It may come as a surprise to Alden's detractors to learn that he understands completely why opera-lovers should be so protective of tradition: "Opera is, to a great extent, about tradition. Many of these works are institutions, people have a very personal relationship with them. So when they go to see their favourite opera and find it performed in a completely different way, it can seem as if a loved one is being roughed up or transformed into a completely different person. It can be very jarring..." Don't we know it.

But be in no doubt that Alden knows and loves the operatic repertoire and its performers (past and present) as well as the next man. Better. In New York, where he was born, he was once bitten and for ever smitten in his early teens. His family was theatrical (his father an actor, now a writer; his mother, a dancer). He and his twin brother, Christopher, quickly graduated from the joys of Gilbert and Sulli-

van (and wouldn't we like to see Alden's *Iolanthe*?) to embark upon a crash-course in opera-appreciation during the final months of the old New York Met.

We should pause here to take in Christopher. When the Alden twins first came to Europe, specifically London, rumours began circulating that among David's more unsettling theatrical tricks was an uncanny ability to be in two places at once. He'd be spotted in the Coliseum audience, watching himself take the curtain-call on stage. Some saw the Devil's hand in all of this. But Christopher, you see, is not just David's twin but his identical twin, and to complicate matters still further, he also directs opera. Fortunately, their work is of a very different complexion (so no allusions to the Krays, please).

David will tell you that Christopher is more controlled, that his productions are more precisely planned, less improvisatory in character than his own. To that I would add "more lyric". So how would he (David) have tackled *Turandot* in the light of Christopher's recent staging for ENO? He wouldn't, apparently. David likes the Puccini operas, but has no real interest in staging them. Hypothetically? He would definitely have gone for an angrier depiction of the chorus in Act 1. But that's as much as he'll give away. Perhaps one day the Aldens will be assigned the same opera at opposite ends of town.

In the meantime, David is back at the Coliseum for a new production, his first, of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. His designer is Ian MacNeil, with whom he collaborated so successfully three years ago on Handel's *Ariodante*. Thanks to MacNeil, he says, he has at last escaped "the white box" which both liberated and imprisoned him for so long. Alden, in common with so many directors the world over, blames Peter Brook's *Dream*. David Fielding probably does too. But in any case, their partnership had run its natural course. It was over. Divorce. Mutual consent. No regrets.

But suddenly the canvas was no longer blank. MacNeil was pressing Alden for decisions on the visual concept months before rehearsals began. And decisions are always a shock to his system. Then again, this initial "conflict of energies" helped push Alden into exploring new vocabularies. MacNeil, he says, has had a softening effect on his work. We saw the beginnings of it in *Ariodante*, where the musical and theatrical stylisations were held in perfect equilibrium. Handel's heavenly formalities were reflected – sometimes in slow-motion – in the poise and fluidity of the body-language.

The piece, and above all the music, always comes first for Alden. Only when he has lived with it, absorbed it, formed a relationship with it, can he begin to build his personal response to it. He describes what he does as "deeply felt rather than deeply thought". The very idea of a "concept" is anathema to him, so he'll thank his critics to give that one a rest. "Obviously I have a lot of ideas about a piece before I direct it. I have a basic instinct about what it means, what the thrust of it is. But what happens in that rehearsal room is all about a shared response to the emotional inner-life of the piece. If you take *Tristan and Isolde*, it's not about actions and events, it's about relationships and desires, and the ambiguity of love, and how close love is to hate and to obsession and self-destruction. So how do you put this on the stage? Generally, I like to take a piece and strip away at it and find a kind of abstract or dream landscape that frees it from supposedly naturalistic details. But in this opera Wagner's already done that, he's already come up with layers of metaphors, symbolism, Jungian dreamscapes... And that's scary because I'm immediately thinking, well maybe this time I should do three very specific things: maybe Act 1 should be in a restaurant, Act 2 in a station, and Act 3 in a hotel room. Maybe because the piece is so abstract, I should do the opposite..."

A pause. Alden is waiting for my response. At this moment in time, I'm his audience.

"You know, I instinctively like to do the opposite anyway. Play against the text. If the stage direction says 'she weeps', I like her to be laughing. That's the way my mind works... It's a favourite creative trick of mine..." Another pause. He's being provocative, pushing the confrontation, just as he would do on stage. If you challenged him on the issue of textual fidelity, he'd no doubt argue that texts are only words and words are in a sense abstract and open to interpretation. Particularly where music is involved.

The moment passes. And he takes up on *Tristan* again, almost like he's thinking aloud. "In a way, it's on the edge of being a radio drama – the most intensely focused chamber piece imaginable, albeit on an epic scale... Intimate voices in an orchestral wash... A man and a woman in a vast empty space." In my mind's eye I'm seeing photographs of those extraordinary Wieland Wagner productions from the Fifties and Sixties. I imagine he is, too. Stillness will be a major factor in this production. That and a sense of heightened physicality. Alden will be looking to explore tensions between the two.

How else do you theatricalise the 40 or so minutes of the love duet?

With just over a week to the first night, *Tristan* is still work in progress. Alden likes to keep his productions fluid and open-ended for as long as possible. Changes are likely to be made right up to, and beyond, opening night. It's a somewhat unnerving prospect for his cast, some of whom will doubtless express their annoyance before the week is out. Alden sounds almost as if he's banking on it. "Annoyance is sometimes a good thing. It creates a kind of energy. Insecurity and anger can sometimes be just as positive as their opposites." There's no answer to that.

Of course, we're talking here about a whole new breed of opera singer. Gone are the days (well, almost) when the star soprano would swan in with her own frock, her own interpretation, and a clause in her contract stating that on no account would she be singing and moving at the same time. But, says Alden, these divas "knew who they were". He wonders if singers today are not becoming almost too passive, too reliant upon the director. Contrary to popular misconception, Alden has absolutely no interest in imposing his will on anybody. His working method is semi-improvisational, meaning that he's never happier than when a singer picks up the ball and starts running with it.

"It should be a 50/50 partnership. If a singer leads a scene and does something which I think is interesting, or even which I don't understand, but which is strong – then it's in the show. It's exciting to connect with a singer, to free them up physically, mentally, to unlock their full potential. Sometimes I'll use prescribed movement as a kind of directorial shorthand, but I'd far rather develop what a singer gives me."

There remains the matter of the chairs. They appear like a leitmotif in every Alden production. They were all over *Ariodante* like a rash. Why? "I really don't know. Characters can't just lie on the floor. They need to sit. I don't like sofas. I hate benches. I quite like suitcases..." (Well, I did ask.) "It's a classic absurdist image – you know, after Ionesco – a strange room filled with chairs, or an empty room with one chair and a door... I can tell you, there is one chair in *Tristan*." Just one? "Just one. For now..."

Alden's new *Tristan* opens next Saturday at ENO, London Coliseum, WC2 (0171-632 8300). His *Ariodante* returns to the repertory in May.



## shopping

## No sniggering, no staring, no pretense

Work begins next week in Manchester on Europe's first gay shopping mall. Decca Aitkenhead reports



Phoenix will have a florist, a dry cleaner, a restaurant and a coffee shop – but no sex shops. Above: Terry King, the man with the vision. Photo: Craig Easton

Where do transvestites go to get their dresses cleaned? Where do gay men go to send flowers to their boyfriend? Where can gay DJs buy classic gay anthems – and chat about the clubs where they play? The snigger or frankly hostile stare are familiar to every gay and lesbian shopper who – despite the much-hyped currency of the pink pound – often have to endure second-rate service, buying products designed without their tastes in mind. But next week, in Manchester, work is beginning on Europe's first ever gay shopping mall.

Phoenix will be located in the city centre, on the edge of the "gay village" which lies along the banks of the Rochdale canal, between Piccadilly and Oxford Road. The mall will house 14 shop units, a bar-restaurant and a coffee shop, spread over two floors of a converted Victorian building. A decor of brass, wood and glass is designed to echo the classic style of a New York gallery, though opening hours will be tilted to a European model. The complex is due to open on Easter weekend.

Terry King, 28, is the Manchester entrepreneur behind the project. "So much has been made of the pink economy, but it's never been

extended beyond the world of bars and clubs and restaurants, until now. Here, we're creating an entire environment where gays and lesbians can buy the things they want in an atmosphere they know will be gay-friendly."

"Manchester has a huge shopping centre called the Arndale, and frankly it's an awful, yellow carbuncle full of old women elbowing you out of the way to get a bit of cheap crockery. Gay people just don't want to go there. We are creating something more diverse, where shops are highly individualised, with personal service. It's all about a less aggressive lifestyle. Shopping should be a pleasure."

According to the last census, there are 310,000 gays and lesbians in Greater Manchester alone. The gay village is the fastest growing area of the city, attracting interest from businesses which would until recently have taken no interest in what was once a run-down quarter. Boddingtons recently opened a huge pub-restaurant and yet another bar is to open in the coming weeks. The pink pound now keeps a gay solicitor's firm, taxi company, record label, hairdresser and countless clubs in business in the village. But Phoenix is not styling itself as an exclusively gay centre.

"There will be no sense that you have to be gay to get through the door," says Terry. "Some of the shops will be gay-owned and gay-run, and others won't. But you will never get the situation where a ladies' clothing shop refuses point blank to let a man try on a dress, as you do in most department stores. Instead, you'll be getting an assistant who'll be saying: 'That looks fab!'"

Unquestionably, gay style has pioneered many areas of fashion since the decade – whether clothes, music or dance – and the service offered in many gay bars puts your average sales assistant to shame. But, as yet, the only city to tap the retail market with a purpose-built mall has been Los Angeles.

Terry explains: "I opened a gay bookshop two years ago, and within weeks I had begun to appreciate the scope of the market. Imagine how nice it will be for a gay person to go to a florist and get flowers sent to his boyfriend, and not have to pretend that it's a girl with a funny name, or have to just put initials on the card."

"And there will be clothes shops, a video shop, a record shop, a glass and chinaware shop and a travel agent. The dry cleaner's is straight-owned, but they jumped at the chance, because it's an opportunity for them

to show how much they value their gay customers – drag artists, transvestites and so on – and they understand that it's embarrassing for them to troop into a high street shop with their frocks."

Pauline Samuels, of Piccadilly Dry Cleaners, explains: "You wouldn't think, in this day and age, that there would still be any prejudice – but there is. Once I'm actually in the village, in their own community, I know my gay customers will be much more comfortable."

One outlet which won't be appearing in Phoenix is a sex shop. "We decided to specifically keep away from anything sexual. That's the traditional image of a 'gay shop', and it's already more than provided for elsewhere," says Terry.

And the customers? Paul Slater, a student and regular in the village, says: "It's all very well going into Kendalls to buy make-up – if you're feeling in the mood, you can camp it up and brazen it out. But when you're not feeling like a drama queen, and just want to pop in, it's such a bloody hassle – you think, what are you looking at, you old bint? The thought of shops where you could feel as at home as you do in a gay bar is amazing."

Phoenix will also offer new employment to Manchester's gays and les-

bians, outside the traditional arena of bars and clubs. "You see so many 30- and 40-year-olds working behind bars, earning what 18-year-olds earn, simply to be in an environment where they can be themselves. It's been very hard for them to find stable employment in a gay-friendly workplace, away from the nightlife economy, but hopefully it will now be available."

The shopping centre is due to open for Easter, and will operate European opening hours – many shops will stay open till 10pm, and the restaurant will stay open till 2am, for example – capitalising on the fact that the village is perhaps the only area of the city centre consistently busy after hours.

Terry is already planning for beyond the opening at Easter. "The potential is huge. In the future we hope to extend, to put in a gay doctor's surgery, a new home for the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard, and conference rooms. Hopefully this will lead to centres like this springing up across Europe."

Will it be the acid test for the power of the pink pound? "Perhaps," says Terry. "But more than that, it will be a test of the power of high quality, diversity and good taste. It should be a pleasure to shop here, whatever your sexuality."

A life in the shift of  
Glyn Lewis,  
sales executive  
at BMW,  
Park Lane



Glyn, 32, joined BMW Park Lane as a sales executive in 1987. He is single and lives in Chislehurst, Kent

"I get up at 6.30am. On a good day my journey into work takes an hour. I have a quick bowl of muesli and get dressed. I like to think I look clean-cut and smart. I've got a couple of Boss suits, the rest are from M&S. A lot of motor trade people wear swanky baggy suits and fake Rolex watches. I mean, what kind of impression does that create? I'm not just an ambassador for the salesroom, but an ambassador for BMW. Park Lane is BMW's flagship showroom, so I want to present just the right image. BMW drivers are successful and classy. Buying a BMW means you've arrived."

"I grab a potato and a can of tuna fish – there's a kitchen at work with a microwave; get into my BMW 328 Coupé and set off. It's very fast, it's beautiful and it's positive to drive. Driving through dreary south London suburbia in a £34,000 car is a bit of a contrast. But it's amazing the reaction a nice car gets. People look at the car, look at me and put their thumbs up a bit to say 'Wow! You are lucky'. That's a buzz."

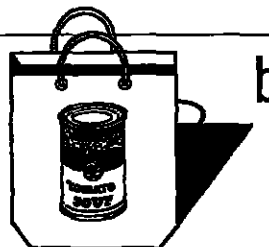
"I get to work at 8.15am and the day starts with a sales meeting at 8.40am. I get a basic salary and then commission on top. My target is 120 cars a year; I normally sell between 120 and 140. I sold more in the Eighties. It was mad. People had money to burn. Customers would come in, see a car and buy it on the spot. The showroom used to open late on Saturday night to catch the Arabs coming out of the casinos. Lately, we've had a lot of Malaysians buying cars for their children who are studying here. Big expensive cars with extras like you would not believe: leather seats, air conditioning, CD players. There's a lot of Russian business around, too."

"Doors open at 9am. A lot of showroom traffic is people just looking, but anyone who comes in gets the BMW experience. We'll have a nice bit of Vivaldi playing or Classic FM. A friendly face at the desk says hello. Coffee is offered. The customer can walk around, feel the cars, touch them, sit inside them and when ready we will go and talk to him. No one is dismissed because of the way they look. We ignored one person once because he looked so scruffy and he turned out to be a very famous photographer."

"Lunch is normally on the run. Very occasionally on a test drive, you'll get a completely incompetent driver. How can the car sing to the customer if he's crunching the gears? The other thing that really hurts is the perception of my job, you know 'car salesman' – bit dodgy, bit stupid. We are intelligent professionals and deserve respect."

"The showroom closes at 6pm, but we work for as long as it takes. My fantasy is to win the lottery, go into work and sell myself a car. But I'm happy. I earn a very good living, in the best location and with the best product. What more could I want?"

Sally Williams



## bazaar

## Bestsellers: Top 10 at Tesco bakery

Clearly, the English will not give up their white bread without a fight: not a single brown loaf appears on the list of top-selling in-store bakery products at Tesco. We're obviously attached to doughnuts, too: they appear well up the list, whereas Danish pastries and croissants are nowhere to be seen. This is fortunate, as it so happens that next week is National Doughnut Week. Buy a doughnut at any independent baker's and part of

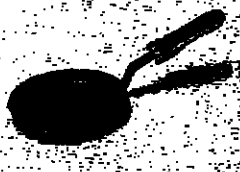
the price will be donated towards Save the Children. They're hoping to raise £75,000.

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1 Plain baguette (400g).....           | 39p |
| 2 White split tin (800g).....          | 59p |
| 3 White farmhouse (400g).....          | 43p |
| 4 French baton.....                    | 29p |
| 5 Jam doughnuts (50).....              | 69p |
| 6 White bloomer (800g).....            | 59p |
| 7 White tin (sliced) (800g).....       | 59p |
| 8 White farmhouse (800g).....          | 59p |
| 9 White farmhouse (sliced) (400g)..... | 43p |
| 10 Soft white baps (12).....           | 79p |

## Good thing

Pancake pan with handle mitt, £12.95

If your efforts at pancake making usually end in the bin or on the ceiling, then you'll need one of Hogarth & Dwyer's crepe pans on 20 February. Once we'd followed the rather time-consuming pan preparation instructions (fill with salt and bake in the oven for two hours), we were rewarded with perfect pancakes: crisp, flippable and delicious. Best of all, the instructions insist that you protect your newly non-stick pan by never washing it – oh joy! If you buy the crepe pan and handle mitt in February, the price is reduced from £14.35 to £12.95 for both (plus £2.25 p&p). Call Orderline: 01483 456 251, or drop in at Hogarth & Dwyer, 240 High St, Guildford.



## Mad thing

Cactus juicer, £9.95

A marvel of the 20th century – a man-made cactus that doubles as kitchen equipment. Use it to squeeze yourself a zingy early morning orange juice, or to splash lemon all over your Shrove Tuesday pancakes (see left). Alternatively, you could just park it on your windowsill and talk to it. There is no chance of it growing, of course, but then again it won't die on you either. From the Conran Shop, 81 Fulham Road, London SW3 6RD (0171-589 7401; mail-order available).



## For what it's worth

We asked Professor Jeffrey Almond, Professor of Microbiology at the University of Reading: how can you cure a cold?

"The problem is that there are very many different viruses and several different virus families which cause the cold, and there is no drug available which will act on all of them. Also, the diagnosis of which particular virus you have is not easy and may take days."

"The other problem is the infection is quite established by the time that you feel the symptoms in your nose. From the time you start sniffing it may be only five or six hours before the cold is in full stream. So even if there were appropriate drugs, you'd have to know which one to take and it would need to act quickly to stop the virus."

"It is possible to vaccinate against this winter's influenza. However there are no vaccines available against the other cold viruses. In any event, the viruses constantly change so vaccines would not be useful for more than one or two seasons."

"Taking certain cold remedies can make you feel better and relieve some of the symptoms. Aspirin and paracetamol will bring down temperature, mucus-drying drugs will stop your nose running. Home remedies such as lemon juice or garlic nasal drops might also bring relief. But these remedies only treat the symptoms – they do not stop the virus, in the same way that taking bicarbonate of soda for a stomach ulcer will make a tummy less painful but not cure it."

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## AUCTIONS

Why is the normally decorous Bonham's being taken over by a host of brassy dames in scanty clothing?

It is 10 years since Bonhams launched sales of erotica and five years since it abandoned them. Would-be vendors inundated the auctioneers with boring reproduction Oriental soft-porn prints and ivories. It was difficult to find original, tasteful erotica.

Now Bonhams is launching Nudes in Art picture auctions. The first, on Thursday, starts at 6pm in order to tempt after-work private buyers. Most picture dealers think it will flop: after all, who collects only nudes? But it is a new theme, and one that could appeal to those who have never bought art before – besides the merely lascivious.

That is the trouble with selling sexy art. Those prepared to bid for quality – over £100,000, say, for a life-size Poynter or Alma-Tadema of an undraped slave girl in classical pose – prefer to attend major auctions of Victorian pictures, not sex-themed sales full of artless voyeurs with modest incomes. Estimates at Bonhams' nudes sale are comparatively low: from £100 to £22,000. There are no Poynters or Alma-Tademas,

not even a Picasso – although about a third of the Picassos in the big auctions are erotic. Does the economic ratchet of erotica inevitably drive down taste as it drives down price?

There are certainly some pretty brassy Continental dames among the 111 lots. The Reclining Female Nude by the Hungarian Pal Fried (d.1955) is not so much reclining as actively soliciting (est. £1,500-2,000). And the reclining nude by the Frenchman Henri Montassier (d. 1946, est. £6,000-£8,000) gives new meaning to the auctioneers' tag "The Property of a Gentleman".

For those who disdain blatant attempts to arouse, there are Victorian life-class drawings of the kind in such profusion last year in the sales of Rudolf Nureyev's estate. Here is a seated, contemplative old man with pot belly and Noah's beard, drawn in pencil by Herbert Wilson Foster, the Stoke on Trent figure painter, in 1884 (before fine draftsmanship and pencil charcoal and pastel had become unfashionable). The estimate is £100-£150. A studio study of nudes in pencil by the better-

known Sir William Orpen (d.1931), is est. £300-£500.

The nouveau art posters and prints by the Frenchman Alphonse Mucha (d.1939) are zooming up in price after being dropped by the money-troubled Japanese five years ago. In Christie's South Kensington's poster sale, Thursday (10.30am), the estimate on Mucha's *Salon Des Cent* poster of 1896, with classic image of a bare-breasted woman with headband, is £7,000-£9,000 – not far short of the £10,000 it might have fetched during the boom. Since then, prices have been down by a half or more.

Latest downer: Twenties posters by the Frenchman Adolph Cassandre. His highly stylised "Wagons Lits Cook", est. £3,000-£5,000, might have fetched £4,000-£6,000 a year ago. The trouble is that the Twenties are no longer the only period favoured by "retro" enthusiasts. Today, the Sixties are big. Even the Eighties has devotees. He'll be back.

John Windsor





The toys parents think are good, probably aren't. And the ones they hate just might be. By Sally Williams

**D-6 months:** A musical mobile, rattles  
**6-24 months:** Peek-a-boo toys: pop-up toys, shape sorters. Cause-and-effect toys: rattles, drums, anything that makes a noise. Role-play toys: dustpan and brushes, tea sets, drills, brushes. Books: surprisingly useful, surprisingly early on. Comfort toys: teddies, etc. Construction toys: Stickle bricks or Megablocks  
**2-5 years:** More sophisticated construction kits: Duplo, Lego, Meccano. Jigsaw puzzles; dressing-up clothes; drawing and painting equipment; a set of small figures and accessories such as Playmobil; dolls; balls.

Actually, children are probably the last people to be seduced by what used to be soft drinks turning alcoholic: experimenting teenagers don't want to be seen clutching something so obviously redolent of childhood. They're far more likely to nick the vodka from someone's drinks cupboard and go down the local graveyard than slug their way solemnly through dozens of bottles of something expensive and hard to conceal about their person. Adults, meanwhile, like to surround themselves with childlike comforts, which explains the continuing success of restaurants which sell nursery food and the booming sales of Disney videos. If there's one sector of society that's at risk from a tin of Two Dogs, it's those people who've been searching all these years for a beverage they can keep down when they've got a hangover.

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## shopping

## The pinta with a longer life

It looks like fresh milk, it tastes like fresh milk. And some people think it might replace traditional UHT. A brand of drinkable extended-life milk could soon be available in your corner shop

By Annie Bell



The secret lies in the way it is heated

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

All of us have, at one time or another, reached into the fridge for the milk, only to find it has gone lumpy overnight. Particularly in summer, it can seem as if a fresh pint lasts only about a day. So wouldn't we all welcome a pint that lasted up to a month, and still tasted good? This may soon be possible, with the development of "extended-life milk".

Of course, we already have UHT (which stands for Ultra Heat Treated, or possibly Ultra Horrible Taste) milk, which can last for six months, but this is something most of us only turn to in desperation when we run out of the fresh stuff.

Producers of UHT, which occupies 6 per cent of milk sales, would have us believe that the bad old days of it tasting like burnt evaporated milk are over, and that 96 per cent of people

cannot tell the difference between fresh pasteurised and UHT. There is some truth in this, but it is not so much to do with improved technology as changing habits: it is the cream in the milk that produces the nasty taste when heated, and today 70 per cent of milk sales are of skimmed or semi-skimmed.

So the excitement over a new long-lasting milk alleged to taste just like fresh milk is understandable. The process for this milk was developed some years ago by the Milk Marketing Board, which was deregulated in 1994. Unable to find a co-operative to market it they patented the process and put the marketing on hold.

The Milk Marque was then set up to replace the MMB, and they established a product development centre for the industry which acts as a consultancy, identifying opportunities.

They set up pilot plant to test the new process.

The next step was a link up with Farm Produce Marketing, a company who had recognised there was an opportunity to market this product on airlines. The requirement was for a milk that was packaged in 125ml portions to fit into the in-flight Kellogg's cornflakes bowls on British Midland and other UK airlines. The milk was titled "Fresh Milk from Cheshire".

The demand was for a full-cream milk that had all the taste of ordinary fresh milk but a longer shelf life, because by the time the latter had trickled through the catering red tape it had outlived its 10-day life.

The secret of extended-life milk lies in the way it is heated. Whereas fresh milk is pasteurised by heating it to 72°C for 15 seconds, and UHT is heated to 140°C for two seconds, the

new extended-life milk is heated to 120°C for one second, a process designed to retain all the flavour of fresh with the benefit of being long-life.

But how long is long? Fresh milk has a shelf-life of 10 days. UHT of six months, and the new milk an extended life of 28 days. Once open, they all deteriorate at the same rate, a few days. So it is questionable whether this milk should be seen as a long-life product at all.

But changing consumer habits may still ensure its success within the retail market. Milkmen are a dying breed; roundsmen are franchised and the decline in doorstep deliveries is running at 17 per cent per annum, and in three to four years, the system may disappear altogether. At which point, extended-life milk could find its place in the market.

Chris Bird, manager of the Milk

Marque Product Development Centre, says it is "still unknown" whether the product could succeed within the retail market. But he sees a niche for the consumer who lives alone and wants a four-pack that will last a month.

There is also the issue of vitamins. As every supermarket shopper knows, there is mild and there is vitamin-enriched milk. While pasteurisation is a heat treatment designed to kill any harmful bacteria, UHT is designed to remove any ageing devices and in the process of doing so kills off some of the vitamins. However fresh the new extended-life milk may taste, it will have a lower vitamin content than ordinary fresh pasteurised milk.

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Noel Farrell, 33, computer technician  
"It's OK. I suppose it's better than UHT. I always have fresh milk at home and it's not exactly the same but it's not bad."

Michael Griffin, 57, computer worker  
"There's really no comparison. This tastes like fresh milk and it is much more tasty than UHT. I wouldn't drink UHT and I'd be satisfied this was fresh milk."

Jago Most, 33, software specialist  
"The new milk is not like stuff in Holland. It's not of the quality I'm used to at home. I usually drink farmer's milk and I suppose this is about midway between UHT and that."

Kelly O'Donoghue, 19, student  
"I suppose this is much nicer than the UHT, which tastes very creamy and sickly. This tastes much better. I could drink this, even though I don't generally drink milk."

Ena Withers, 43, sales manager  
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Interviews by Scott Hughes



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## The Tesco of classical music, Raymond Gubbay Ltd stacks them high and sells them low

On 30 September 1791, the Freyhaustheater in Vienna presented the first night of a new work. It appeared on the playbill as "A Grand Opera in Two Acts by Emanuel Schikaneder", though the long arbitration of posterity has reassigned the credit. It is now conventional to refer to *The Magic Flute* as an opera "by Mozart". At first history didn't deal very kindly with Schikaneder – one of the early accounts of his involvement with Mozart (detailed in 1791, HC Robbins Landon's account of the composer's last year) held that he was driven solely by financial need, and imagined his entrepreneurial pitch in the following way: "Write an opera for me, entirely in the taste of the present Viennese public; you can surely satisfy not only the connoisseurs but also your

own reputation, but see to it that you cater primarily to the lowest common denominator of all classes." In other words, it is a fantasy of mercenary instincts transformed by sanctified genius, more so as the anecdote has Mozart working for free in return for copyright and then being ripped off by his partner.

These days we are inclined to be warmer to Schikaneder (and more accurate) – indeed he represents one type of the heroic impresario, midwife to a masterpiece, a man of ebullient theatricality and noisy good cheer. He was played by Simon Callow in the film *Amadeus*, which is a compliment of sorts and a premonitory piece of casting, given Callow's later forays into direction. But however good hearted and intimate his

relations with Mozart, Schikaneder wasn't above maximising his profits, even by the 18th-century equivalent of spin-off merchandising. The playbill points out that "the word-books of the opera, which include two engravings, where Herr Schikaneder has been engraved in the role of Papageno with the actual costume, will be sold at the box-office for 30 kr." Given that a visitor seven years later noted the prices in the pit as 17 kreuzer, it's clear that the overpriced souvenir booklet isn't a modern invention.

There are other historical models for the impresario-as-hero, most notably Diaghilev (currently the subject of an exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery), whose energetic promotion of Russian art and music have given him a status



THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

as virtual co-creator of several 20th-century masterpieces. Looking around the contemporary scene, though, things are much thinner. It seems a long-shot to me, but posterity may yet hallow the opening nights of *Les Misérables* and *Cats*. If so, Cameron Mackintosh will fit the bill rather well as a cultural Midas. In the meantime, though, we will simply have to make do with Raymond Gubbay.

To listen to some people talk about Mr Gubbay (to listen to Mr

Gubbay himself on occasion), you would think that there was no bathos involved here. The Tesco of classical music, Raymond Gubbay Limited stacks them high and sells them low, and all, so it is said, without the defiling touch of state subsidy. Indeed Mr Gubbay, whose cast-of-hundreds centenary production of *La Bohème* opened in the Royal Albert Hall this week, even took it upon himself to give the Royal Opera a brisk lecture about theatrical economy. His top-price tickets, he noted, were only £37 and if he could do it, so could they.

If they were actually engaged in the same business, there might be some weight to this challenge. But they are not. With a house of only 2,000 seats, the Royal Opera has to maintain productions of the highest quality and also unwell

new work (they don't wait 100 years so they can guarantee the box-office popularity of the work they present). What's more, without the Royal Opera house and its "elitist" consumption of public funds, it is difficult to believe that enterprises like Mr Gubbay's would even be feasible.

The abiding fantasy about subsidy is that it can be hermetically sealed within one building, that its effects never leak out beyond the privileged coterie who have, in the lazy mythology, fed their effete habit with the stolen pennies of the working man. Even the most passionate adherents of trickle-down economics (when it comes to social welfare, that is) refuse to recognise the fluid nature of arts funding in practice, the way it seeps far beyond its notional con-

tainer. In truth, traces of subsidy could be detected at every level in Mr Gubbay's *La Bohème*, from the training and experience of the singers to the tastes of the market he serves. However much he hates the idea, he's dependent on the drug. And in this he does share something with Schikaneder: Mozart is listed on that first playbill as "Kapellmeister and present Imp. Roy. Chamber Composer", an acknowledgement that his life and development as a composer was inseparable from patronage.

The difference with Schikaneder is that he took a risk with the new, just as Diaghilev did, too, in his day. And that's what makes a truly heroic impresario, not just a canny eye for the packaging of the classics.

## Caution: theatre director at work

By Georgina Brown. Photograph by Herbie Knott

I'd come to watch Patrick Marber, the man behind the spoof chat show *Knowing Me, Knowing You*, in rehearsal for 1953, a tragedy by the poet Craig Raine. But a thought kept nagging away. What would Alan Partridge, that most odious of chat-show hosts, make of his creator directing this revision of a great French classic? The thought must have occurred to Marber, who has been interviewed many times by Partridge (in various guises, from an irrepressibly chirpy Beirut hostage to a sullen, and inevitably humiliated rock star). For without a moment's hesitation he was acting out the scene. Alan Partridge: It's now, now, now, it's now, let me get this right. It's 1953. Is it set in 1953? What exactly is that all about? Patrick Marber: Well, it's a fictitious 1953. Partridge: What do you mean fictitious. Is it real? Marber: It's imagined. You have to imagine it's 1953.

Partridge: Right. OK. And it's a comedy? Marber: No, it's a tragedy. Partridge: Right. What happens? Marber: It's about love and people kill themselves. Partridge: (chuckling): Right. Yeah. Marber: And it's on at the Almeida Theatre. Partridge: Any sex in it? Nudity? Marber: Lots of sex. No nudity... The moment someone takes their clothes off on stage people lose interest in the play. I'm really opposed to it because I know what I'm like when it happens – I just can't take my eyes off it. You're talking to someone who's really looking forward to seeing *Showgirls* and is determined to enjoy it. (Partridge loses interest and the scene fizzles out.)

With that out of the way, it's time to go to work...

There's nothing funny about being in a rehearsal room with Patrick Marber. Not when he's directing Craig Raine's excursion into the cheerless dark and intimidating territory of French neo-classical drama. Even the boldest take on Racine's *Andromache*, a daisy-chain of unreciprocated love unravelling in high-flown poetry and ending bloodily, isn't going to turn it into a bedroom farce.

Marber prowls and scowls and smokes, stooped and round-shouldered, like a young man – he's 31 – aping fogeydom. Maybe it's his heavy bullish head whose outline calls to mind another actor-playwright-director, Harold Pinter, which pulls him forwards. Occasionally he frowns, a disorienting private kind of frown; it avoids eye contact and might be shyness and might be arrogance and might just be the way his face arranges itself, it's hard to tell. The atmosphere within the Almeida's barn-like rehearsal-room is almost as frosty as outside in north London where there's a minus-15C wind-chill factor. You can see the breath of the four actors, wrapped in several layers of jumpers and coats, and huddled in front of the chief's desk to hear who has lost which lines. ("This is a quite radical but it's absolutely what's needed," insists Marber. "We [Marber and Craig Raine] were on the phone all night about this. He didn't like the cuts of poetry, and I agree, but we've had to be ruthless. No, we're hanging on to that, it's his favourite image.")

That done, it's time to tackle a vital scene. It concerns the meeting between Vittorio Mussolini, king of Italy, and his captive, the woman he loves who also happens to be the widow of the man he killed. The fate of her young son whom Hitler's secret envoy has come to claim lies in his hands. Apparently this scene was a particular fiasco in yesterday's unhappy run-through. One actor refers to "the worst crisis yet"; another offers, to "try anything, I'll do it in a tutu if it helps" – a joke of sorts were it not for that edge of desperation. They begin, experimenting with new moves and different emphases. Some actors wait for instruction, others offer their own analysis of the situation. Marber squashes one suggestion with a straight: "Don't confuse the issue. I know this play like the back of my hand, and swats another with, "No. It's an ugly move." At one point he issues an appeal with such severity that it becomes a reprimand: "You still found that image rather conveniently to hand. Find those images. Mean something. Move us. Move the theatre."

"Ah, the scotum-tightening rehearsal-room," cries poet Craig Raine (apparently incapable of uttering without letting slip an allusion to Joyce) as he bustles in in scotum-strangling jeans and turquoise anorak. He is bang on cue. Had I been the recipient of Marber's displeasure, I might have moved myself, weeping, from the production, never to return. Fortunately actors are made of sterner stuff. More important, they are obedient. It's clear too that despite the odd clash, these actors trust their director and bang on his every word – particularly when it's "good" or "better", which it sometimes is. And they're right to do so. By the end of the session, the tricky meeting has been completely reblocked and each performance

redefined with startlingly fine results. At last each actor seems to be playing the same scene revealing a subtext as eloquent as the text.

It might, of course, have been an elaborately rehearsed performance just for me. Whatever, my presence is now considered extraneous. Extensive cuts must be dished out to four more actors and Marber thinks I've witnessed enough humiliation.

Later, with the day's work completed, the actors gone and the room warm at last, the director, though pale with weariness, has also defrosted. "Don't worry, I'll give you good chat," he says. Those icy and arrestingly blanching blue eyes look merciful. He nibbles chocolate cake, fiddles with a Swiss army knife, and the post-mortem begins. Marber is appalled to be accused of being dismissive – if only selectively – towards his actors. "I'm really depressed you think that – because I don't think of myself as that." He groans and, snail-like, retreats into his cosy black cardie. He eventually emerges with a grin and a shrug. "But I probably am. I hope I wouldn't say 'Nah, bollocks, fuck off' to an actor who couldn't cope with it. Some can, some can't. I know what the actor is totally capable of doing and it's my job to get him to do it."

So what about the scowl? "That's the way my face is," he says contradicting himself with a big soft smile. And the tense solemnity of it all? "We laugh a lot," he laughs. "But not today. It's quite hard to generate a jolly atmosphere with this sort of material. I haven't done enough directing to know what directing is but I'm a creature of instinct and I do what feels right on the day. I don't have masterplans. I listen very carefully to the designer and try to listen to the actors."

"I suppose I'm damned old-fashioned. I serve the text and try not to be too flash. I don't like anything flash. I don't like flash cars, flash people. I don't want to be a flashy director. Also I suppose I'm very serious about the work and suspicious of rehearsals which are a laugh-a-minute. I don't want to see a show where I think the actors are having a better time than I am. I've seen shows like that where it's one big jolly wank. I'd much prefer to see some viciously disciplined piece of tough nasty theatre than a great big jolly romp. I think a lot of what happens at the RSC is jolly romping, they dust off some old comedy and everyone overacts and pisses around and it's not funny. That's why I'm doing tragedy."

Most people have a good idea about what Marber finds funny and it's not bland, anodyne frolics. *Knowing Me, Knowing You* won accolades, awards and the attention of four million devoted viewers; it was also criticised for its cruelty round the edges. Not everyone enjoys jokes featuring wheelchair children being hit, even smart-arse children who deserve it, but with his pitilessly accurate pastiches of the news in *The Day Today* and a video diary in *The Paul Calf Video Diary*, Marber has been responsible for making telly as funny as telly ever gets. Last year Marber temporarily put away such puerile inanities (there will be a new series of *Knowing Me, Knowing You* when he, co-writer Steve Coogan and

producer Armando Iannucci find a mutually free moment in their frantic diaries) and came to the dramatic fore with a remarkably accomplished first play *Dealer's Choice*. Argument continues about whether this was or was not the calling card of the next David Mamet, but everyone agrees that it revealed him to be a natural at theatrical carpentry. A sad domestic drama about a father-son relationship and two surrogate father-son relationships cunningly disguised as a gang comedy, it drew both on Marber's own experience as a once compulsive gambler (he remains a poker-sharp) and, naturally, his relationship with his father, who was once president of Footlights. ("Yes, I am fulfilling all my father's dreams," confirms Marber. "With all the pressures and pleasures that entails.") The play opened, with Marber making an impressive directorial debut, at the National Theatre and later transferred to the West End. Marber is currently working on the screenplay for Channel 4 and will be directing a new cast in a New York production – "a dream come true".

Such successes have Marber in the rare position of choosing exactly what, when and how his next project will be. Most often, he says, get the "Flattered. Fuck off" delivered via his agent. Nevertheless, he remains far from arrogant, keenly aware that the bubble could burst. ("In five years' time I might not be so lucky. I might be writing gags for game shows.") While his emergence appeared to be meteoric and from nowhere, this wasn't the case. He hacked around the cabaret circuit "learning my craft" for several years. *The Day Today* was a long time coming after "years of thinking I'm never going to get anywhere". Such was his despair that he gave up for a year in 1991 and "did nothing at all". There was frequent depression. "Ten years of clinical depression but never actually in a clinic. I'm not depressed now but if you've been depressed for sustained periods of life you always feel when you're not depressed that you're being a bit unfaithful to what you actually are and you think it's waiting to claim you. But, touch wood, I've had a nice time recently."

One of the nicest times was directing his own brilliantly astute version of *Miss Julie* ("25 per cent Strindberg, 75 per cent me") for the BBC. Relocated to the eve of the general election in 1945, the psycho-sexual tensions of Strindberg's play were reflected in the social tensions of that time. Similarly, 1953 transliterates a classic, but this is the first time Marber has directed a play he hasn't written. "I suppose I'm doing it to become a better writer and a better director of my own material. When I was directing before it was really what I'd seen in my head when I wrote it. Directing someone else's work means you get inside someone else's head and think, what did he intend? how did he construct the narrative and make a character interesting?" Such a rigorous approach to his craft has, not surprisingly, won Marber a reputation for being driven and ambitious which infuriates him. "It's not true. I'm lazy. I'm a slob. I find it very hard to get down to work; I have massive self-discipline problems. I'm an ex-compulsive gambler. My life could have gone either way and still could. There's a part of me that



would like to live in Vegas and eke out some meagre living playing poker."

Certainly it wasn't any old writer whose head Marber was interested in exploring. While reading English at Oxford, Marber rated Raine's poetry above almost anything else. By chance last year when he was searching for a play to direct ("sniffing round book shops, skulking in the London Library") he discovered 1953, commissioned (and rejected as too radical) by Jonathan Miller in 1988. It wasn't produced until last year at the Glasgow Citizen's Theatre. "My response to 1953 was part-fan, part-director, though I wouldn't have wanted to do it if Craig hadn't been available to be at rehearsals and willing to be collaborative. One of the nicest things about working in the theatre and TV is that you get to work with people you admire." While some directors are happy to treat writers as typists, Marber regards Raine as both a collaborator ("A rehearsal in which a script

doesn't change is pointless – there's got to be a bit of slack in the writing so that you can make it work for the actors") and a father-figure ("I'd never overrule Craig"). "It's fantastic having him around. He's behaving exactly as I behaved when I was directing *Dealer's Choice*, the excited playwright pleased that someone is playing his words."

Fewer words than Raine might have wished, but enough to show him off pretty well. While Marber's production deliberately harks back to its original classical Greek source through its set of curved benches which vaguely echoes an amphitheatre, Racine doesn't get a look-in. Marber hasn't so much as read *Andromache*. "I'm not at all interested in Racine because I'm directing C Raine – suspiciously an anagram of Racine – and what's great about Craig's play is the rugged content and high style that can move between the visceral and emotive very simply, effectively and easily. What makes it fun is that one minute a character is going "Fuck off you cunt" and

the next they are spouting high-falutin poetry and it's very beautiful."

Intense as he is, it's clear that fun – a profoundly intense sort of fun – is what Marber seeks and finds in the theatre, as much in other people's creativity as in his own. "When I was 14 I was one of those people seeing plays and dreaming that one day I'd have a play on at the National Theatre, and for it to have been a first play and a success was incredibly exciting. And I still feel like a fan and I still live like a student and look like a student and feel like a student, and still find it inordinately strange to be out there in the world in published form, to be interviewed for a paper. A part of me thinks, this is great, but this isn't me. I'm just a little squirt who wants to be something. I still remember being 15 and listening to The Jam's "To Be Someone" and I still feel like that. The moment you stop being a fan, you lose something."

1953 at the Almeida, London N1 (0171-359 4404), 8 Feb to 30 March



## arts reviews

## THEATRE

## Stanley, Cottesloe Theatre

Stanley Spencer's convoluted love life makes for a curious drama. By Paul Taylor

If everything in life is holy, then this must include extra-curricular sex. It's a point that's not been wasted on the David Koresches of this world. Being calculatedly wacky in Waco is very different, though, from being sublimely cuckoo in Cookham, as the life of the artist Stanley Spencer aptly demonstrates.

Pam Gems's overlong but very funny and affecting play about the painter never doubts that he was utterly sincere in believing in the sanctity of his sex life, a belief that involved wanting to have two wives on the go at once. In fact, it shows that everyone concerned would have had a much easier time of things if he'd been a hypocrite.

The play is keenly alive to the potty, painful comedy of his complicated marital arrangements. His newly divorced first wife and soulmate, Hilda, finds herself begged to come back as his mistress when wife number two, a snooty, towering virago, abandons him and returns to her lesbian lover. If this lot could have taken their troubles to Relate, you feel the entire staff would have opted, on the spot, for early retirement.

What the play makes you understand, though, is that Stanley's selfish purliness to the needs of nearest and dearest is somehow part and parcel of the paradoxically monomaniacal generosity of his art. In its charmed universe, where Christ relives his career in Cookham and lumpy, clumsy creatures achieve the levity of transfiguration, everyone is saved at the final judgement. Which is both charitable of Stanley and not exactly lacking in blinkered ego either.

John Caird's production beautifully judges the balance of all this. With the colossal *Resurrection* (not yet finished) on the back wall, tiers of scaffolding and part of the audience in pew-arrangement seating, the Cottesloe is transformed into a sort of secular cathedral. While Stanley and his second wife choose sexy underwear in a posh shop, a swelling church organ in the background acts like a cheeky aural pun. The spirituality of Bach steals over scenes that would give a devout Lutheran a heart attack.

The performances are spot on. There's more than a hint of another Spencer (Diana; Wales, Princess of) in the spoilt Sloane vowels of Anna Chancellor as spouse two. Can this woman have been quite the monster the play paints her? Deborah Findlay's wonderfully moving performance as the first wife prevents you from ever condescending to her self-destructive devotion to the artist. It's significant that Spencer feels closest to her when she's safely dead. Antony Sher's splendid Stanley – a bespectacled nerd with a garden gnome hat and transpositional clothes – is never more than two steps away from being beside himself with fanatical, maladroit rapture. You completely believe that here's a man who could marvel for hours at the beauty of wood-lice in the loo.

Booking to 30 March: 0171-928 2252

## TELEVISION The Girlie Show, C4

The latest late-night sleaze-fest has a liberating message for women: we're clever enough to behave as badly as blokes. Oh dear. By Jasper Rees



Babes with attitude: Rachel Williams, Sara Cox and Clare Gorham

There are 10 commandments of television entertainment, most of them pretty obvious. Thou shalt not omit adultery. Thou shalt steal ideas from the other side. Thou shalt covet *Neighbours*. Thou shalt have no other gods before me, unless her name be Anthea Turner. Etc.

The commandment least contravened, and therefore least invoked, insists that thy advertising budget shall not exceed thy production budget. Conventionally, a channel will pump money into promotion only for programmes on which sizeable bucks have already been blown. In the case of *The Girlie Show*, the lion's share of the budget appears to have gone on a massive nationwide poster campaign featuring the trio of snarling presenterettes.

Unfortunately, a programme cannot measure its impact on the size of the columns it excites in the chattering broadsheets; otherwise, Peter York's *Eighties* would be the greatest series made. The hype-ventilated opener was inevitably a damp squib: the first job for two of the babes with attitude was to announce that, thanks to a restrictive work permit, the third babe with attitude would actually be downgraded to guest status. As Rachel Williams, a seven-foot lesbian clotheshorse, was touted as the biggest draw, her conspicuous absence sparks off memories of rain-sodden bonfire nights when the Catherine-wheel resisted ignition.

For the second show, a good fist was made of papering over this crack. You could see the whirling brain of an ideas team: if Rachel is English on her mother's side, let's roll out her mother to be very English, but also – and here's the genius part – very

rude! On she came, and though she had plainly refused to utter the words herself, she did admit under questioning that she had taught her daughter to say "willy" and "fanny".

The bulk of the show relies on the presentation skills of Sara Cox, a Wonderbra'd Lancastrian who pretends to be slutty, and Clare Gorham, who plainly has a clause in her contract doubling her money every time she does a mock toff accent. Their job is to say "shag" a lot, and generally offer women a sexually pro-active role model: all mouth in trousers.

Most features deliver a variety of kit-off or another: mooning yobs, topless firemen, a guest singer who torches his pubic hair, a rectum that extinguishes a match. There was even a reheated report on the New York policewoman who posed for *Playboy*. No matter that Channel 4 devoted a documentary to her in last year's *Red Light Zone*; indeed, they opened the season with it. Let's extol it for the report on how women in uniform turn men on.

Wedge-wise, we may still be at the thin end. Future items almost certainly include organising an orgy (table placings and what have you) and sex-and-consumer testing (this week: cat o' nine tails). There are eight more shows to fill.

*The Girlie Show* has a perfectly harmless aim (it doesn't quite qualify as an agenda), which is to show that it's okay for women to break wind in public, too. On its own terms, it's a brilliant success. But it pays male boorishness the compliment of aping it, in every sense of the word. It has become the thing it deplores, proving women are spending too much time at the ironing board.

## CLASSICAL

## Borodin Quartet, Wigmore Hall

Nicholas Williams salutes the veteran Russians' adventurous programming

The Borodin Quartet holds a distinguished place in music's notional Almanach de Gotha. Formed in 1945 by fellow students from the Moscow Conservatoire, it's been playing with the same line-up since 1976 – quite an achievement, even in these tranquil late-20th-century days of vigorous longevity. But what do we listen for in an ensemble of such mellowed experience?

With a certain *Schadenfreude*, it's possible to find joy in apparent lapses from perfection. True, in the first of their Wigmore Hall series, on Thursday 25 January, first violinist Mikhail Kopelman's tuning occasionally wavered at the peak of his rushing scale-passages in the last movement of Schumann's Third Quartet. But in a work that notably fails only in its finale, these were transient blemishes. Besides, the very presence of this otherwise beautiful piece drew attention to the adventurous context of the whole.

Though living composers were excluded from all three recitals, the Borodins ranged widely beyond the usual repertoire of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The Schumann was preceded by Tchaikovsky's Quartet No 2, a rarity to British audiences, but here realised with intuitive warmth and stylistic command. Schubert's C minor *Quartettsatz* sounded lighter beneath these veteran fingers than when heard in this hall after Christmas from an ensemble half their age. Did the Schubert seem a strange piece to round off so much weightiness? Not with Tchaikovsky's *Andante cantabile* as the encore, its simplicity of utterance placed so as to wind down the evening with a quiet envoi.

But the ensemble's self-evident attraction is its groomed and balanced tonal range. The elfin second theme of Schumann's opening Allegro, for example, received a lighter-than-air presentation. And in the next movement, a string of extended miniatures that the composer might have called *Novelletten*, each change of texture was perfectly captured within a binding pulse that remained the arbiter of long-term goals.

There was more of the same quality, if less consistently realised, at the Borodins' final concert on Tuesday. Capricious tempi in Shostakovich's Quartet No 3 were presumably authentic, since he personally supervised their reading of the complete cycle. Sparse textures responded to generous vibrato and portamento. At the close of the passacaglia-like slow movement, violist Dmitri Shebalin and cellist Valentin Berlinsky pondered the theme like scholars disputing an ancient text.

The symphonic breadth of Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" challenges quartets of all complexions: the sense of strain in the Borodins' reading is the essential part of the atmosphere missing from Mahler's orchestral version of the work. Conversely, the long, vibrato-less lines of Barber's famous *Adagio* suit massed strings better, and the Borodins' poor tuning showed why. A thought for Fretwork – is this piece ever played on violas? Their quiet voices might just be the perfect medium.

DICKIE  
FANTASTIC  
on the schmooze



## I assume the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC isn't covered in Sky TV logos

Thursday morning, the Imperial War Museum, and a gaggle of media folk are hanging around, eating the complimentary biscuits and canapés, but getting a little restless. The do is half-an-hour late to start. "We did invite a bunch of Holocaust refugees," says the marketing man at BSkyB, glancing nervously at his watch, "and also some people from the important Jewish houses, but then we discovered that Shimon Peres is in town today, which, as you can imagine, is..." "It's some competition," I agree.

"It really is," says the marketing man. "But we have got a couple of survivors, they're actually here right now and the

lady from the *Jewish Chronicle*, and that's not bad." A flustered young woman rushes over. "Kerri wants to do some photos with the Holocaust survivors," she announces breathlessly, "and Channel 1 wants to film it. Shall I let them?" "Well," says the BSkyB man, "I suppose so."

This is the party to celebrate the launch of the BSkyB *Schindler's List* exhibition at the Imperial War Museum: an "exact replica" of the permanent Schindler exhibit at the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC, although I assume that the Washington exhibit isn't covered in Sky TV logos, or little earnest reminders of when, exactly, Sky

will be showing *Schindler's List* on the Movie Channel. "BSkyB has sponsored the exhibition," announces the display, solemnly, "to promote understanding of the events portrayed in the film *Schindler's List*, receiving its British TV premiere on Sky on 11 February 1996." It then goes on to proclaim, soberly, that there will be "further opportunities to see this prize-winning film during the following months."

Goodness, I always thought that Sky's rather annoying proclivity to milk their hit film acquisitions by constantly repeating them was a result of having no cash, rather than a serious philanthropic desire to educate their viewers

in Holocaust history. Well, the scales have certainly been lifted from my eyes.

A TV news crew is on hand to document this momentous event. They film the genuine Plaszow survivor looking at the photograph of Amon Goeth. And then, in the wink of an eye, the BSkyB head of programming sidles effortlessly up to his side and announces, solemnly: "Hello, I'm David."

The survivor nods, and David holds out his hand to be shook, which he dutifully does. They continue to shake hands, while the TV news crew barges through the crowd to get a sombre close-up of the hand-shaking. Later, I ask a soundman which TV station

they're from. "Sky News," he replies.

The centre piece of the exhibit is the Schindler chronology:

1941. Germans establish a Jewish ghetto in Krakow.

1962. Schindler is named "Righteous Amongst the Nations" by Yad Vashem, Israel.

1996. *Schindler's List* receives its satellite TV premiere on the Movie Channel.

Not really, I made the last one up. But the fact remains: the old phrase, "Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it." Sounds less like a philosophy today and more like a marketing strategy. And then

we're herded into the cinema to watch some forthcoming Sky clips: the "best bits" of *Schindler's List*, including much carnage, and some of the "genocide edition" of *The World at War*, which will be repeated to coincide with their forthcoming Holocaust season. Back at the exhibits, situated next to some bombs and old First World War aircraft, a bunch of school children are listening to a taped explanation of aircraft diameters. "The Sopwith Camel 2FI has a wing span of 26ft 11ins, and was credited with the destruction of 1,200 enemy aircraft."

One little boy turns to another, and says, excitedly: "Wow."



THE WEEK IN  
REVIEW  
David  
Benedict



## KEY



EXCELLENT



GOOD



OK



POOR



DREADFUL

THE MUSICAL  
THE FIELDS OF AMBROSIA

## overview

The first (and last) musical about a travelling executioner with an electric chair in his van – Death's equivalent of an Avon lady – who falls in love with his next client, an Austrian ex-courtesan.

## critical view

"The second half left me weak with bliss as it bumbled over good taste," laughed Paul Taylor. "Will live on in folklore," observed the *Daily Mail*. "You would be a fool to miss it. One of the all-time great bad musicals," giggled the *Telegraph*. "This show is 1. silly, 2. dull, 3. cheap-minded," deduced the *FT*. "The Terminal Folies," declared the *Times*. "Loathsome," thundered the *Evening Standard*.

## on view

Aldwych Theatre, London WC2 (0171-379 3367). But hurry, it won't be there for long.

## our view

Unmissably bad, especially the end. A genuine jaw-dropper and a camp classic. A must for theatrical ambulance-chasers.

THE TV SERIES  
ANNIE'S BAR

A 12-episode comedy-soap set in the House of Commons starring Larry Lamb as a dastardly chief whip, with guest appearances by Edwina Currie et al. Edited 24 hours before transmission for topicality.

Thomas Sutcliffe found it "a touch nervous here and there, but showing definite promise." "Some very sound actors who do wonders with flimsy lines," remarked the *Guardian*. "Jokes apart, there were many things they could congratulate themselves upon," approved the *Times*. "An accessible, sharp and pacy start... I, for one, will be watching again," applauded the *Telegraph*.

Channel 4, Thursdays, 9.30pm.

A promising start. Looks like being the first real hit for Ardent, Prince Edward's TV production company.

THE PLAY  
LES ENFANTS DU PARADIS

Simon Callow adapts and directs Marcel Camé's classic, regularly voted the best French film ever made. Robin Don designs, and the RSC production stars Helen McCrory and Rupert Graves.

Paul Taylor was "100 per cent behind Callow's project. Watching the dubious outcome I began to have misgivings." "Great art is not a transferable commodity," commented the *Guardian*. "Ambitious but turgid," decided the *Times*. "One of the most pointless exercises the RSC has ever attempted," groaned the *Telegraph*. "Vivid theatre. Its plunge into romance is a rare treat," disagreed the *FT*.

Barbican, London EC2 (0171-638 8891).

At four-and-a-quarter hours, it's an hour longer than the original cinematic masterpiece. Case dismissed.

THE FILM  
FATHER OF THE BRIDE PART II

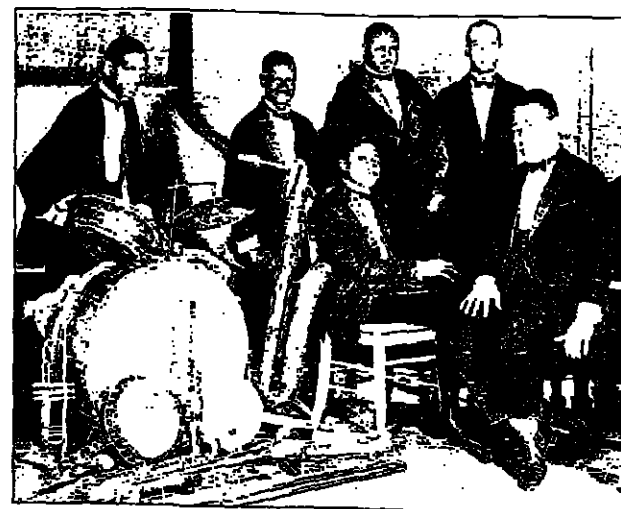
From the same team who gave us a poor but oddly successful remake of the 1950 *Spartan* Tracy/Elizabeth Taylor movie. So, naturally, here is Steve Martin in the remake of its 1951 sequel.

Sheila Johnston found it "insultingly predictable." "Terribly pleased with itself and utterly backed out at one and the same time," said *Time Out*. "Overly complacent," agreed the *Standard*. "Good-looking, snarled the *FT*. "A numbing experience," warned the *Telegraph*. "Pop," growled the *Times*. "One of the cranks at the press show actually fell out of his seat in disbelief," wrote the *Guardian*.

On general release.

After duets like the straight-to-video *Mixed Nuts*, Steve Martin desperately needs a hit. This ain't it.





# Apple of the global eye

New York in the 1920s had it all — wit, jazz, movies, Prohibition, the Harlem Renaissance... It was the blueprint of the 20th century. It laid the foundations of the whole post-modern world. Malcolm Bradbury welcomes Ann Douglas's dizzyingly comprehensive study of a cultural furnace

According to F. Scott Fitzgerald, in the Twenties "something subtle passed to America, the style of man." In terms of world geo-politics, this was not surprising. European powers had bankrupted themselves in the Great War, and some had collapsed entirely; the United States entered the war a debtor nation and emerged a creditor one. Its massive, rapid technological revolution made it dominant; the nation that had started in the country and moved to the city now had a new kind of modern metropolis. When Henry James returned to New York in 1904, he was struck by the sight of the harbour: "The aspect power wears there is indescribable..." he wrote. "It is the power of the most extravagant cities, rejoicing, as with the voice of the morning, in its might, its fortune, its unsurpassable conditions."

In her striking new book *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (Picador, £20), Ann Douglas argues that the "something subtle" didn't simply pass to America, but specifically to New York, Manhattan, America's one World City, "the world's most powerful city." In the Twenties, in the aftermath of World War, America had become not just a highly urban but an extravagant Big City society, at the heart of which was the Big Apple. The New York of the Twenties was an overwhelming place — physically, culturally, architecturally, emotionally. Its skyscrapers rose and kept rising, even into the slump that closed off the decade and rendered the Empire State Building the Empty State Building.

The American Twenties was a politically conservative, culturally radical decade. It was the era of the *New Yorker*, the *Algonquin Wits*, the birth of mass media, the Americanization of Modernism, the universalization of American styles. Everything met in Manhattan, which captured the publishing industry, the music industry, the newspaper industry, the vaudeville industry, a big piece of the movie industry, and even that key ideological framework, the psychoanalytical industry. Uptown, north of Central Park, was Black Manhattan, where educated, urbanized African-Americans — the "Talented Tenth" — produced the Harlem Renaissance, and the mongrelized or multi-cultural spirit of the Jazz Age prospered.

The world increasingly acknowledged Manhattan. Not only Hart Crane but the Russian Futurist poet Mayakovsky wrote poems celebrating its great technological marvel, Roebing's Brooklyn Bridge. Not just John Dos Passos (in *Manhattan Transfer*) but the urbanized, wandering modernists of Europe wrote fictions of Manhattanized unreal cities and the Shape of Things to Come. Picasso, and other Cubists, sneaked Manhattan skyscrapers into their paintings. In the wake of Woodrow Wilson's visit to Versailles in 1919, avant-garde Paris was Americanized. Black jazz swept the scene; Josephine Baker led the black company of the *Revue des Negres*. The fact was that for many Europeans America, and Manhattan in particular, became the sign and symbol of the Future: high-rise, polyglot, accelerated, miscegenated, culturally chaotic, exciting, or, said James, "floating, hurrying, panting."

New York wasn't a cultural city like Boston, a manufacturing city like Chicago, a political capital like Washington. But the recession of real politics was one hallmark of what was a culturally revolutionary decade. Writing something that might be called psycho-cultural history, Douglas reads the working of a different politics. Her previous book, which focussed on 19th-century New England, was *The Feminization of American Culture*. Now she reads the psycho-drama of another revolt, patrician and matricidal. Modernism overthrew the patriarchal high cultural values of nineteenth-century

Europe, but also the feminized Genteel Tradition of America. It was a revolt of the permissive, adventurous children, with psychology, mass culture, advertising and cultural pluralism as essential aids. It required the creation of a new American usable past, as well as an America of the future.

Douglas looks at the complex mix of forces that shaped this new cultural politics, putting emphasis on issues of race and gender. The War had strengthened the hand of campaigners for female suffrage, already granted in other democracies. Meantime among African-Americans migration to the city stirred the belief that a new era of acceptance was near. Douglas shows how the two campaigns — which had been closely linked in the reforming New England of the 1850s, since most abolitionists were pro-feminist — tugged apart. Many white female suffragists saw the black campaign for civil rights as a threat. White women were the active campaigners for Prohibition, protectors of the Genteel Tradition, guardians of the feminization of American culture.

It was blacks who made the stronger alliance with America's new popular Modernist culture. Harlem was its emblem. Once the rural estates of early Dutch merchants, it had become by the turn of the century the Docklands of the day — a piece of over-extended real estate built for white occupants north of Central Park as subway lines extended. Following Booker T. Washington's injunction, "Get some property — get a home of your own," white migrants from the South filled the often handsome buildings (Strivers' Row), and black realtors moved in. One result was that black arts — from literature and poetry to jazz and dance — put down roots at the centre of American culture. It was, Douglas emphasises, essentially a new black culture, a "sudden awakening, an instantaneous change," forged out of the black-and-white encounter in the melting-pot of the fast-changing metropolis.

The black arts themselves became a symbol of explosive new America. Singers like Bessie Smith, musicians like Louis Armstrong, writers like Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes and Jean Toomer, Harlem venues like the Cotton Club, captured the metropolitan imagination. The black arts were indigenous, different, radical, savage; the dark laughter that teased and transformed the sober white mask. Like the other melting-pot cultures that reshaped Broadway, created the movie industry, the radio industry, the spirit of mass culture and what Douglas calls the "media-dependent arts," they became an American phenomenon that entered world consciousness. In the traditional arts, Europe had the edge. But this link between new artistic admixtures and the nation's command over the new media and technologies — records, radios, movies, advertising, popular culture from baseball to cars and comic strips — gave the USA a pluralised, vernacular, brash black-and-white culture it could claim as its own.

This is a startlingly well-documented book, the product of fifteen years of good research. Unsurprisingly, it gives many grounds for dispute. Despite Douglas's intensive proofs that most American writers and culture-leaders of the period either came from or settled in Manhattan, it's been frequently and rightly pointed out that many of the leading figures came from the Middle West, and this set up a tense relation between urban and rural, Big Apple and Middle America. True, there was a Twenties revolt against the Middle American "Booboisie", as H.L. Mencken called mainstream Americans, but also much inner cultural tension (one thing that might help explain why, as Douglas heavily emphasises, so many of

the writers ended up alcoholics). There were many counter-forces, such as the famous Scopes "Monkey Trial" in Tennessee indicated, which are still there to this day.

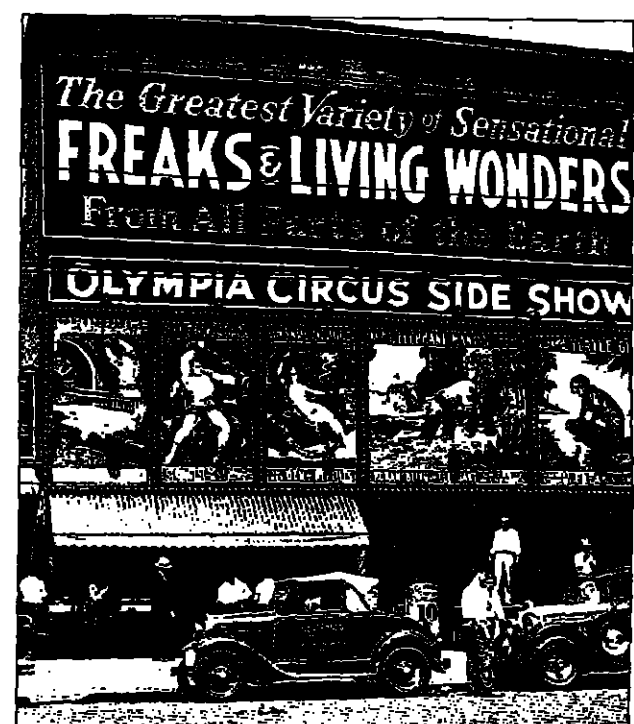
Manhattan wasn't all. Indeed in the Twenties there was a double flight from it — especially when the prices of Greenwich Village lofts soared as avant-garde living became designer chic. One wing went West, especially to New Mexico; another hurried to the French Line pier and headed for Montparnasse, where life was cheaper, the avant-garde livelier, and you could get a drink. Douglas resolves this tension by making the Parisian expatriates honorary New Yorkers. So, it seems, were T.S. Eliot, and Sigmund Freud. Freud thought America "a gigantic mistake," yet Freudianism became the great American popular lifestyle philosophy, promoted by, among others, his son-in-law Edward Bernays, who passed the Freudian message on to American advertisers. The American cultural revolution was always aided by Parisian and Middle European gurus: Freud became American despite himself, and was later fascinated by his transatlantic influence.

The Twenties was an era of vitalism, of a Bergsonian *elan vital*, an optimistic American Modernism that tried to shrug off European cultural pessimism and took progressive modernity at its disturbing word. The dissolution of historical values advanced apace. Head-talk and cultural innovation replaced historical gentility. Douglas is excellent, as well as enthusiastic, about the process whereby former high cultural values dissolved into the fabric of a quite new type of mass culture — providing nothing less than the foundations of the refractive, history-less pluralism of our poly-cultural, bi-gendered post-modern world.

There have been many studies of the American Twenties, the great decade of the Modern throughout Western culture. None has accumulated as much material from multiple aspects of culture — literature, music, psychology, popular books, architecture, advertising, jazz and dance, fashion and design, gender transformation — and put it to such coherent use, even if the coherence is sometimes forced. This wouldn't be a modern study if it didn't have a strong feminist aspect, and Douglas is inclined to berate the matricidal impulses of many Twenties writers and culture heroes (but if you'd had a momma like Hemingway's...), attempt a rescue operation on such figures as Mary Baker Eddy, whom Freud took as a serious adversary, and make something of a wonder out of the egregious Nancy Cunard.

The Twenties is a decade which acquired the shape of an entire era, starting in effect with the Versailles settlement of 1919 and dying with the Crash of 1929. By then in Manhattan the Modern was already a tradition; the Museum of Modern Art was founded a few days before the Great Crash. It was Scott Fitzgerald who famously read the American Twenties as a manic curve, with an ever-growing drumming of danger, drink and suicide. Douglas's psycho-history sees American culture as itself afflicted by a paradigmatic manic-depressive syndrome, "with which I believe America is still afflicted." Manhattan, in her extensive vision, is an exceptional, experimental wonderland touched with grim cultural warnings; yet, somehow, an ultimate and vividly creative emblem of that experimental, mass-cultural American-ness with which the rest of the world still has to contend.

Malcolm Bradbury is Professor Emeritus of American Studies at the University of East Anglia, Norwich. His most recent book is *Dangerous Pilgrimages: Transatlantic Mythologies and the Novel* (Secker).



Revolt of the permissive, adventurous children: (main picture) scenes of living at the Cotton Club became a symbol of the 'polyglot, accelerated, miscegenated' culture of Manhattan. From top: Duke Ellington and his band in 1923; Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, two of the doomed artists surfing the decade's 'manic curve'; and a downtown atrocity exhibition, a by-product of the mass immigration that turned New York into a 'world city' after the war

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OUT NOW IN BLACK SWAN PAPERBACK



# Devalued sovereign

The Duke had girlfriends! The Queen didn't like Mrs Thatcher! A Royal fashion adviser has blabbed! The 'controversial' biography of HMQ is 'Hamlet' without the soliloquies, says John Campbell



Soap opera curtain call? The Queen and chronically eclipsed husband acknowledge cheering crowds

Photo: Mike Maloney

Heinemann's publicists have done their job well. From all the outraged denunciations it has attracted, you are meant to believe that Sarah Bradford's new biography of the Queen is the most authoritatively indiscreet of all the avalanche of prurient revelations which have embarrassed the monarchy in recent years.

In fact it is a solid, professional but overwhelmingly conventional panegyric which adds little of substance to the mountain of existing royal biographies from Robert Lacey, Anthony Holden, Elizabeth Longford, Jonathan Dimbleby, Kenneth Harris and a dozen more. Sarah Bradford is strongest on the Queen's early life which she has already covered in her (much more scholarly) *George VI*, published in 1989. She has had access to the royal archives up to 1952; and she makes good use of royal correspondence with the Sitwells. Beyond that, she is neither particularly authoritative nor seriously indiscreet.

Virtually the only "revelation" is the suggestion that Prince Philip enjoyed a number of sexual infidelities in the first decade of his marriage. But there is nothing new in this. There was gossip, even in the relatively deferential newspapers of the 1950s, linking his name with the actress Pat Kirkwood. Previous biographers have repeated the rumours of schoolboyish high jinks at the Thursday Club, run by the society photographer, Baron. Sarah Bradford has gone marginally further by openly disbelieving Philip's disingenuous defence, that he was guarded night and day by a detective: "the exploits of the Prince of Wales with Mrs Parker Bowles while similarly guarded have blown holes in that particular line," she writes. And she confidently alleges a string of other girlfriends: "They include a princess, a duchess, two countesses and other titled and untitled ladies." But she does not name them, or give any corroborating evidence; so her assertion remains nothing more than a tale.

This illustrates the peculiar difficulty of royal biography: it is almost wholly dependent on gossip. Admittedly this is a problem for all contemporary history, where the author has no written sources. But politicians lead at least part of their lives on the record, while their colleagues, aides and opponents are usually happy to talk candidly and attributably within a very few years. The political biographer thus has a bank of conflicting but largely verifiable evidence to place before the

Elizabeth: A Biography of Her Majesty The Queen  
by Sarah Bradford.  
Heinemann, £20

reader. Readers of royal biography, by contrast, must take much more on trust. The testimony of courtiers is mainly anonymous: on a single page describing the Queen's character, Sarah Bradford cites the views of "one of her contemporaries who has known her since childhood," "one woman politician," "a relation," "one of her fashion advisers," "a former aide" and "another relation" — all unnamed. They may all be unimpeachable sources; but who knows?

A more specific difficulty in writing about the Queen is that following the welter of books, leaks and interviews through which Charles and Diana have competed for public sympathy in the last few years, as well as all the other ghosted material about Margaret, Anne, Fergie and the rest, we know far more about all of them than about the central figure in the whole shooting match, the Queen herself. Inevitably much of this book is concerned with how she has handled the marital disasters of her sister and her children. But while they are the active protagonists, she remains a cypher whose views can only be guessed at. It is *Hamlet* without the soliloquies.

It is the same with politics. We all think we know what the Queen thought of Mrs Thatcher, that she worried about the Commonwealth and the socially divisive consequences of Thatcherism. But there is virtually no evidence. In 1986 the *Sunday Times* ran a front-page story claiming to reveal that the Queen was "displeased" by many of Mrs Thatcher's policies. It was immediately denied, as it was bound to be. In about a hundred years our grandchildren will be able to read her diary: until then the biographer has almost nothing to go on.

Very rarely does the mask slip. During the miners' strike she unguardedly remarked to a journalist, presumably thinking it a safe conversational bromide, "It's all about one man, isn't it?" There was another dodgy moment in the television film *EDR*, when the Queen was heard by millions complaining to President Reagan about the burden of welfare payments in democracies. Sarah Bradford mentions this, but only in a brief aside.

Had she been writing a serious book she would have used these precious glimpses to introduce some discussion of the monarchy's constitutional powers on the one hand and its role in patching the social fabric on the other. She finds room in her bibliography for two important recent books on these two topics — Vernon Bogdanor's *The Monarchy and the Constitution* and Frank Prochaska's *Royal Bounty: The Making of a Welfare Monarchy*. Between them they make a powerful case for the value of the monarchy — but she shows no sign of having come to grips with either. Prochaska demonstrates the whole royal family's active involvement in an immense range of charitable work without which the welfare state would collapse. He shows this to be a deliberate strategy for the monarchy's survival, originally developed by George V after the Bolshevik Revolution, and consciously followed by his heirs. By actually reading what the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh say in their Christmas messages and other speeches — however banal and anodyne they may appear — Prochaska gets far closer to the Queen's real view of her job than the shallow conventions of royal biography begin to do. The level of Bradford's discussion of the monarchy's constitutional powers is illustrated by her comment that "it was characteristically kind of Elizabeth" to give Ted Heath the chance to try to form a coalition in February 1974.

Concentrating primarily on the Queen's private life, Ms Bradford paints a depressing portrait of the juncing stuffiness of court life and the stifling etiquette which still makes it impossible for members of the royal family to relate to one another, let alone to the society beyond the Palace walls. Sadly, Lord Altricham's famous criticism of the narrow social caste from which the royal household is recruited is scarcely less apposite today than it was in 1957. If the family could not cope with "commoners" of such antecedents as Diana Spencer and Sarah Ferguson, who on earth can it reach out to?

Though she does not hold the Queen blameless for the disintegration of her family, Sarah Bradford nevertheless praises her dedication and unflinching sense of duty. She cannot bring herself to draw the cruel conclusion from so much of her own evidence. That Elizabeth's narrow interpretation of that duty has led directly to the crisis of public confidence in which the monarchy, for all the good it does, now finds itself.

## Capering around Shepherd's Bush

A gripping first novel encourages readerly self-congratulation. By Nicholas Lezard

Most of us have probably fantasized about robbing a bank at some time; and if the fantasy is allowed to develop a little, we might wonder about doing it in a non-violent, stylish and fool-proof way, which will leave no-one hurt, our consciences clean and our wallets considerably fatter.

This is the idea behind *A White Merc With Fins*. Its narrator is a 28-year-old man, living in a shed in his sister's back garden, a lower-middle-class graduate who does odd temping jobs, monitors the thinning of his hair, and feels his life drifting out of control. Then one day circumstances allow him to come up with a Plan, namely to rob what he describes as Michael Winner's private bank.

Details of the Plan slip out gradually throughout the novel — it's our desire to see it finally unfold that keeps us gripped — and one of the first things we are told is that it involves the flashy car of the title.

Hawes's technique is to combine an old-fashioned caper yarn with an old-fashioned state-of-the-nation novel. The nation as seen by this narrator is urban (Shepherd's Bush, actually), populated by decent vagabonds, ex-junkies, sceptical lefties, out-of-work actors, desperately fending off the day when they apply for teacher training or accountancy.

"We are the retro-people going nowhere backwards, we are the ironic generation, we can stand back and look

*A White Merc With Fins*  
by James Hawes  
Cape, £12.99

down and laugh at it all like it is all some crap-clever ad but irony is really balls, irony is what you do to stop it hurting before it starts, irony is a pre-emptive strike on living."

There are plenty of similar rants and homilies throughout, some of them very funny, some tedious, but all fairly spot-on about what it's like to live in this country today, and charged with the same urgency, in a prose unafraid of long,

spiralling sentences, or those sudden breaks into tiny, portentous paragraphs. Like this.

We should be wary of the neatness of identifications: but it is tempting to speculate on the congruity of his narrator's make-up and Hawes's own. Nothing in the narrator's tone, manner and lifestyle sits oddly against Hawes's inner-sleeve biography — or even his picture (except their different ages, and the fact that Hawes is currently a lecturer at University College, Swansea, which doesn't sound entirely purposeless). If the narrator is named, the details have escaped my two readings of the novel: he may as well be called James Hawes, for one of the most exhilarating things about this

novel is its sense of giddy self-enactment. Hence, I suppose, the jibes against irony. But one wonders if Hawes is being quite as honest as he seems to be claiming.

The book is marvellously entertaining — it remained more or less glued to my hand until I finished it — and will achieve great word-of-mouth success from the kind of people who fancy that they are being portrayed in its pages. The narrator's thoughts and adventures on this and that will very often chime with its readers' thoughts on this and that. And this (and that) is the problem: what we are doing when reading this is not so much engaging ourselves with literature as patting ourselves on the back for our opinions, our street savvy — or maybe

even some more intense form of self-gratification: for what is Suzy, the sexpot Scot with great driving skills, natural cool, and a tummy as flat as a book, but a sensitive liberal man's wet dream? We are meant to fall in love with her, which we do, but then there are still men out there in love with Jessica Rabbit.

This is perhaps churlish. It is a caper, after all, a yarn, a plausible fantasy (although the crucial involvement of the IRA in the Plan, for all the narrator's fretting, suggests an ethical void deep inside) and Hawes gets away with it, just. It is hard not to like something that has made such an effort to be likeable. But like the bank job it describes, it is the kind of trick you can only pull off once.

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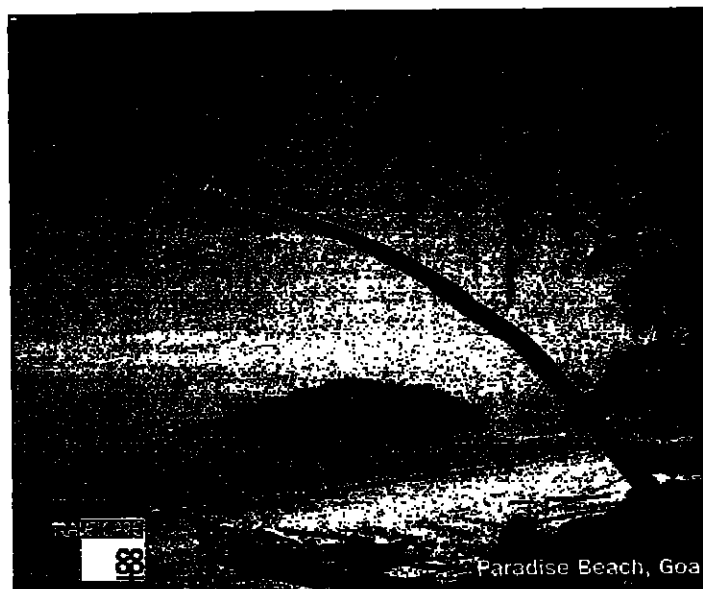
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# Entrancing the passers-by

He was a genius afflicted by guilt and opium. But metaphysics got him in the end. By Lachlan Mackinnon

The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A critical biography by Rosemary Ashton, Blackwell, £25

Most readers now only remember Coleridge for two works, "Kubla Khan" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", probably written in 1797 and 1798 respectively. His was not, though, a meteoric career ending in early death. A generation older than Shelley, Keats and Byron, he outlived them all. Much of his best poetry is too little known: his political and religious thought has a persistent but subterranean influence, and his critical writing still colours the whole way in which we think about literature.

Coleridge's precocious brilliance was evident when he was a boy at Christ's Hospital, Charles Lamb, who was at school with him, described how the "casual passer" would "stand still, entranced with admiration" as "the inspired charity-boy" unfolded classical philosophy and poetry to his friends. Rosemary Ashton brings out well the trauma which underlay this self-assurance, an effective nine-year separation from his west country family: he was sent to school at nine, after his father's death, and hardly went home again.

At Cambridge, Coleridge seemed destined for high achievement but, burdened by debts, he ran away to join the army under the name Silas Tomkyn Comberbach. Rescued by his elder brother George, Coleridge fell in with the poet Robert Southey.

Southey wanted to set up a commune in America, a scheme called Pantisocracy. Part of the scheme was that Southey and Coleridge were to marry sisters. Coleridge's marriage to Sara Fricker, with whom he had almost nothing in common, was a disaster which dogged the rest of his life.

Now set up as a radical poet and speaker in Bristol, Coleridge attracted the attention of local and metropolitan intellectuals, but his life was transformed by his meeting William Wordsworth. Within a fairly short time, the two men were collaborating on the volume *Lyrical Ballads*, the publication of which in 1798 is usually taken as the start of the revolution we call English Romanticism. This should have been the beginning of Coleridge's major phase, but as a poet he was almost finished by 1803. He continued to write, but never so well as in his golden early years, when he produced almost a dozen poems of major importance.

What went wrong? Undoubtedly, Coleridge's addiction to opium played a part. He was not, in fact, a taker of very heavy doses, but the drug weakened his will to accomplish the creative tasks he set himself. It also exacerbated a pervasive sense of non-specific guilt which he had felt from youth. Coleridge's self-esteem was badly dented by meeting Wordsworth, a far more assured and single-minded character. His feeling that Wordsworth was a far better poet than himself was dispiriting, although Wordsworth in fact owed a great deal poetically to Coleridge.



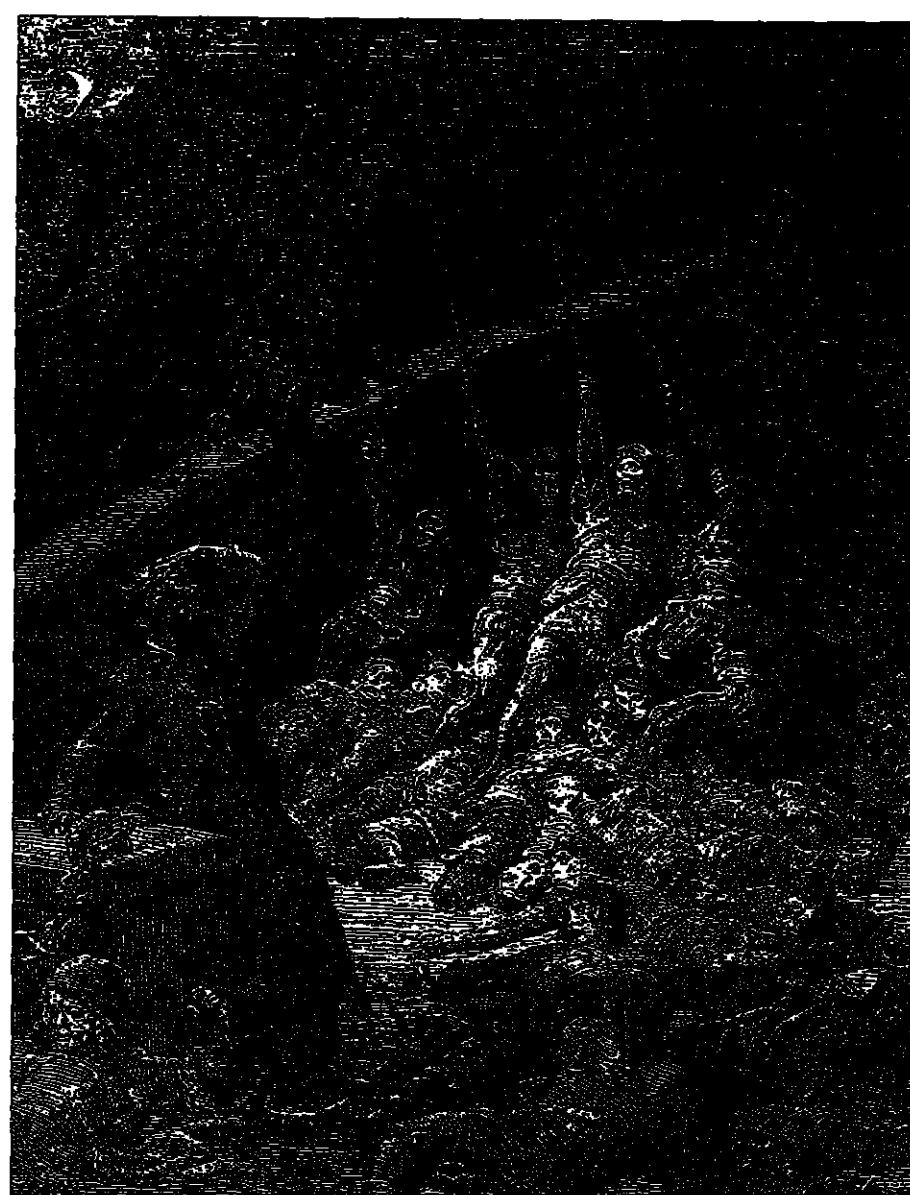
Opium dreamer: Coleridge, etched by Lowenstern, and the 'hasty crew' of his imagination. From Gustav Doré's illustrations to 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1888)

Marital unhappiness certainly did not help. Coleridge's family and friends laid most of the blame, though, on his interest in philosophy, his determination to be a metaphysician. Rosemary Ashton seems to support this view.

Certainly, after 1803 most of Coleridge's work was in prose. From an increasingly conservative perspective, Coleridge wrote until his death in 1834 about poetry, politics, philosophy, religion and himself. The most famous of his later books, *Biographia Literaria* (1817), contains, amongst other things, some of the acutest critical attention Wordsworth has ever received and the most teasing yet penetrating definition that exists of what the Romantics understood by "imagination".

Coleridge also contributed to the development of conservative thought about the relations between church and state, became one of the four or five pre-eminent readers Shakespeare has had, and bequeathed us the notion of the "clerisy", the nearest thing to an English intellectual class. The latter notion influenced Matthew Arnold in particular, while Coleridge's creation of "practical criticism" has, through I.A. Richards, T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis, dominated the teaching of English literature in schools and universities until nearly the present day. At the moment, the rage is for literary theory and Coleridge is again a precursor. The models now are French, but his work on German philosophy and aesthetics was of equal, if not greater, depth.

The problem here is that Coleridge at some points was guilty of plagiarism, and this vice is only one to add to many others. Supported through his life by friends, he never had to earn a living and never showed financial responsibility. He contributed to the decay of his marriage by neglecting his wife and children. He could, as Professor Ashton says, have been a model parent, but



he was too much away. He analysed his own weaknesses unflinchingly but was impotent to overcome them. Virginia Woolf wrote of him that "Dickens would need to be doubled with Henry James, to be trebled with Proust, in order to convey the complexity and the conflict of a Pecksniff who despises his own hypocrisy, of a Micawber who is humiliated by his own humiliation." It is brave of Professor Ashton to quote these words, for this biography is sadly lacking in empathy with its subject, whom she keeps rebuking for immaturity.

Professor Ashton's remarks on Coleridge's poems are briskly conventional. She conveys little sense of the richness that they possess at their best, and her critical remarks are further vitiated by her tacit acceptance that philosophy was Coleridge's

poetic undoing. His great poems are, in fact, informed throughout by philosophical concerns about the problems of morality and of knowledge. To ignore this is to underrate them. Equally, as critic and as thinker, he was always motivated by philosophical concerns: he was not a great philosopher, but without aiming in this direction he might never have done anything else.

It may be that a true "critical biography" of Coleridge is impossible. As Rosemary Ashton herself observes, nobody has done the reading Coleridge did. None the less, to understand Coleridge at all we must see that his life was finally a unity, and although this book is extremely useful for factual reference it cannot explain why its apparently self-dissipating subject should matter to us now as much as he does.

All you need to know about the books you meant to read

by Gavin Griffiths



This week: THE CANTERBURY TALES (1386-1400) by Geoffrey Chaucer

Chaucer's late masterpiece is a collection of verse fictions written in a protean array of styles and genres. One hundred and sixteen were planned, but only 23 completed.

Chaucer's comedy is his tolerant recognition of humanity's failings; his irony is the realisation that humanity's earthly aspirations are absurd.

**Plot:** In the General Prologue, the poet presents himself as an observant bore travelling with a group of "sundry folk by adventure (chance) yfalle / In felawship" on a pilgrimage to Becket's shrine in Canterbury.

The innkeeper Harry Bailly suggests that, to keep themselves amused, the pilgrims, who are both socially representative and a rag-bag, should swap stories - and the most edifying or entertaining will earn a free meal. Each tale reflects upon the character of the teller. The "parfit gentil" knight tells the first and longest: a highly patterned courtly narrative of two friends who fall in love with the same girl, which is resolved with the death of one of the lovers in an elaborate tournament. The Miller then presents his own idiosyncratic version of the "two boys and a girl" theme, except that his tale ends not in death but with a hot iron up the bottom. The pilgrims continue their exchange of noble, smutty, religious stories as Harry Bailly struggles to maintain an aesthetic and social cohesion.

The sequence ends with the parson's serious exposition of God's purpose as revealed by Christian theology. As the Parson examines the Seven Deadly Sins, the reader is forced to reconsider the pilgrims and the nature of their ultimate destination.

**Theme:** The pilgrimage of life. Pride, avarice, anger, lust etc hinder our progress towards salvation. Conversely, sin makes people different from each other, makes them human, and there-

**Style:** The rhyming pentameters encompass with equal facility both the stilted properties of the Prioress and the rougher expressive powers of the Summoner and the Friar. Chaucer is astonishingly versatile. He can wield an epic simile as deftly as he can blow a raspberry.

**Chief strengths:** Chaucer used every available form: bawdy fabliau, courtly romance, beast fable, sermon, epic, saint's life... No poem in the language shows such variety coupled with such white-knuckled intellectual grip. Despite working within the enclosed system of Christian doctrine, Chaucer does not indulge in praise or blame. The final judgement will come from God and the reader who rushes to condemn is tripped by the webs of irony.

**Chief weaknesses:** The harsh realities of disease and poverty are excluded from Chaucer's picture of medieval life. Langland's long poem *Piers Plowman* has the advantage here.

**What they thought of it then:** Chaucer's fellow poets (now sunk into oblivion) rattle with praise. Lydgate called him "my master". Hoccleve believed him "the first finder of our fair language".

**What we think of it now:** Political, feminist and theological analyses are loosening the "merrie England" cosiness that has stifled Chaucerian studies.

**Responsible for:** The stabilising of the English language and the creation of the very idea of "English literature".

## Loud hailers and currant rolls

The female poets of the Auden generation hummed a different tune. By Kate Clanchy

Women's Poetry of the 1930s: A critical anthology ed by Jane Dowson, Routledge, £8.99

This book is worth buying for the ported biographies alone, for the women poets of the Thirties lead, apparently without exception, sensational lives.

Mary McCrory, for example, had 27 affairs and an annulled marriage before she changed her name to Valentine Ackland and took up poetry and Sylvia Townsend Warner. Naomi Mitchison, now 99, was the only girl at the Dragon School, propounded open marriage in 1916 and found her greatest satisfaction in being tribal mother to the Bakgatla tribe of Botswana. Dorothy Wellesley, Duchess of Wellington, was used by Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf to kindle jealousy between them. Anna Wickham's husband sent her to a lunatic asylum when he heard her poems were to be published - but what she really regretted was her frustrated career as an opera singer.

I could go on, through dashes to Spain in ambulances, love triangles in country houses, small magazines and Bloomsbury flats - enough material for a dozen gorgeously costumed and faintly prurient BBC dramas. Jane Dowson's immaculate research has undoubtedly discovered 20 brave and unconventional individuals who wished to be remembered as poets. Whether she has rediscovered good poetry is, of course, another question.

Dowson herself is a literary theorist, which means she can avoid using a value judgement like "good" in favour of a more neutral wish "to exert pressure on our understanding of the poetry of the 30s", and "to strengthen the feminist project which rejects the language of centrality and dominance in favour of diversity and

difference". The mere existence and title of the book, however, poses a challenge to, and evokes the ghosts of, Auden, MacNeice and Spender.

Dowson is particularly keen to illustrate that women can, like these poets, "interrogate national and international affairs", and therefore includes a large number of poems on the great concerns of the Thirties - the Civil War in Spain, poverty, impending war. Unfortunately, it is precisely in this area that the poems seem weakest, and the ghosts of their male counterparts strongest. It is hard for example, to read Vita Sackville-West on September 1939 - "Nothing remains but active faith / and courage of a high despair / in moments when we grow aware / Of noble death that is not death" - without remembering the grand bitter sweep, the "ironic points of light", of Auden's poem of the same title and concluding that Vita should have stuck to gardening.

Similarly, though Sylvia Townsend Warner writes accomplished and evocative pieces on Spain, they pale by the inevitable comparison with Auden's arrogant, absurd, but stirring "Spain", or MacNeice's sensual, musical memories of the country in *Autumn Journal*. But then young men always have been better at grasping public rhetoric than women. It's a question of confidence - it does not occur to members of the master-gender to question their authority to comment on another country's war. They know that platforms and loud-hailers are made for them.

The best poems in the volume leave the posturing to the boys. Elizabeth Daryush and Frances Cornford construct, in immacu-

late metrics, delicate domestic scenes with some of the mysterious, dissonant charge of Emily Dickinson's best work. Daryush's "Children of Wealth", for example, will "wake to horror / wrecking fire - your home / is wired within for this, in every room", while Cornford describes sudden, unexplained absence in an ordered house "You had to go / Who always liked to stay / Before Lousia sliced the currant roll / and rearranged the zinnias in a bowl".

Cornford and Daryush depict rather than declare, murmur rather than lecture, deliberately avoid rhetoric and the declarative voice. In this, though, is their originality, and, far more than in the more overtly public poems, their challenge to the canon. Stevie Smith carried the challenge to rhetoric one step further in her absurdist echoes, her continual ironic adopting of other voices. The voice in "Portrait", for example, is "tongue-tied and shy" - "It really is tantalising / And after all the Education I've had / Surprising / There's nothing I'd rather say / Than something Edifying and Unusual." Smith's refusal to make up the "Edifying and Unusual" prevented her from writing epics called "Spain", and from being perceived as part of the literary movements of the decade in which she accomplished so much of her work.

This volume may not present serious rivals to Auden and MacNeice in the realm of public affairs, but it does remind us that, even if the boys did outrun the pack and sing the loudest anthems, women such as Smith and Cornford were in the same space, but tranquilly off in the outfield somewhere, humming an entirely different tune.

## Tales of the Vienna woods

From Charlemagne to Kurt Waldheim, the history of Austria is a nasty chronicle. By Edward Pearce

The Austrians, A Thousand Year Odyssey by Gordon Brook-Shepherd, HarperCollins, £25

First, this is not "A Thousand Year Odyssey." We move from Charlemagne to Met-ternich in 52 pages. The text proper runs from Franz Josef's accession to 1914. But "A Hundred and Forty-Six Year Odyssey" lacks impact. Don't blame Mr Shepherd. I wrote a book about the quite *douce* 1992 election, and a hype-intoxicated lady subtitled it, "The fiercest election battle ever fought". Truth, among publishers, is prized only above literacy.

But no publisher wrote this footnote about Franz Ferdinand: "King George and Queen Mary had a private reason for sorrow over the Archduke's death. Only seven months before, in November, 1913, Francis Ferdinand had notched up a great protocol triumph by being invited to Windsor Castle with Sophie for a pheasant shoot. (Renowned sportsman though he was, he found England's equally renowned high pheasants hard to cope with at first.)"

When Shepherd couples that long social cringe with a dedication, "To the memory of 'Nata', Princess Natalia Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, a true Austrian and a much loved friend," frankly, you expect a worse book than this.

Honest by its deferential lights, the book should only be read in conjunction with Ilse

Barea's superb history, *Vienna* which chronicles working-class Favoriten and Ottakring, as well as the Schoenbrunn.

Even here, disillusion keeps breaking into the Barbara Cartland impulses. Apparently the root cause of the deaths at Mayerling was gonorrhoea. That lower-middle class venereal disease, lacking the grandeur of syphilis, apparently reduced Crown Prince Rudolf to serial pursuit of a suicide partner. It makes one grateful for the Prince of Wales.

A tougher girlfriend, Mitzi Caspar, laughed in Rudolf's face when in 1888 he suggested joint tragedy in the Vienna Woods. But for Mary Vetsera, "a pretty girl of such parvenu background...to go to bed with the heir to the throne was the peak of romance, to go to her death with him was to scale an even higher pinnacle." (Irony and Richard Wattis seem to be battling it out in that sentence).

If he is a snob, Mr Shepherd is a civilised snob. He detests the Nazis, and tries vaguely to be fair to the socialists. But if Franz Schunmeier, the moving spirit and teacher of the workers, doesn't rate a mention among all those Counts, his vision is one-eyed. Again, he shouldn't castigate the socialists' unruliness in parliament in the Twenties without pointing out that they were starting from scratch on a democracy the Habsburgs never let past the Rathaus.

Inspector Bretschneider, in *The Good Soldier Schweik*, hauls an innkeeper off to jail for saying that the flies had left their marks on the Emperor's portrait, was a good Austrian. So too was Engelbert Dollfuss, who smashed the workers with



Sharpshooter: the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1901

troops. Here Mr Shepherd is uneasy but exculpatory. A handy, if violent, corrective are the reports of Hugh Gaiskell, who was in the thick of it in the mid-Thirties and was revolted by what he saw.

Shepherd has some sensible heroes, such as Stephen Tisza with his instinct against war in 1914, and Leopold Figl, the genial, post-war Chancellor (from the anti-Nazi minority of Christian Socialists). But good guys are for contrast. Austria is as awful as fascinating - ringed by Slavs, some hating, some joining (and hating other Slavs) - and responding to German mastery with a voyeur's reverence for the ability to smash and conquer. Vienna was a multi-racial society all right, raising anti-semitism to levels unknown in north Germany.

The Church judged and was judged at the *Anschluss*, when Cardinal Innitzer said: "It is an obvious duty for us Bishops to declare ourselves as Germans for the German Empire, and we

expect that all faithful Christians will also know what they owe to their people." As for the Habsburgs, they were the original selfish gene. The Imperial and Royal family judged everything for its Habsburg-friendly qualities. Witness the response of Franz Josef when Karl Lueger was elected Mayor of Vienna in 1895. The Emperor vetoed him, "persuaded that Lueger was nothing better than a dangerous demagogue." But meeting him after another electoral victory, Franz "soon recognised in the handsome, black-bearded orator precisely the 'black-yellow' populism whom the dynasty needed in its capital." Is he a dangerous demagogue for me?

Lueger was a mixed evil. Incorruptible and energetic in social policy, he spouted a crass anti-semitism without belief because that was how you got elected in Vienna. And he was elected every time. There is a horrible Austrian continuity not always served by such insincerity. After 1945, early opinion polls showed 33-40 per cent assent to the proposition that Nazism was a good idea badly carried out. Last year, after 40 years of recovery, 22 per cent voted for the not-quite-not-fascism of Haider. But then Adolf Hitler was also, quite as much as Princess Von Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, "a true Austrian."

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# Black humours

Canadian grocer to Telegraph mogul. Robert Winder contemplates the career of a kitten drowner

Anyone attempting a biography of a press baron is to some extent engaged on a lengthy job interview. Perhaps this is why the careers of the Murdocks, Maxwells and Blacks of this world are so frequently narrated – not many journalists (and publishers) take the trouble to produce books about, say, the world's great biscuit moguls. Perhaps, too, this is why such biographies tend to be either fawning or vitriolic: it is axiomatic to some that newspaper magnates are heroic visionaries of the media age, while to others it is just as clear that they are ruthless, venal crooks.

Richard Siklos, in this unflamboyant life of Conrad Black (who owns the *Telegraph*, the *Spectator*, the *Jerusalem Post*, and some 500 other newspapers worldwide) inclines to the former view. He is thorough, respectful and only slightly sycophantic. He buys heavily into the myth of Black as a man of destiny – a latter-day Citizen Kane. He does not deny that his subject's wheeler-dealer style has left him open to criticism – as when, for instance, he sold £12.5 million of *Telegraph* shares immediately before cutting the price of the paper, a move which shattered the value of the shares. But he seems to assume, like Black, that criticism just goes with the territory – there will always be moaning minnies.

Biographies of serial killers always start with a few childhood scenes showing the subject secretly killing the family cat or drowning the canary – classic psychological profiling. Business biographies prefer to linger on their subject's early obsessions with military heroes. By the age of 17, Black had a large library of warlike books, and could recite fleet tonnage and armaments at will ("his favourite book," Siklos reports breathlessly, as if he can sense the tremor of fate, "was *Napoleon and his Marshals*").

Certainly, Black approached some of the companies he acquired with what 17th-century historians would call a "swathe of destruction" policy. When Conrad and his brother took over the Canadian grocer Dominion Stores in 1978, it had 25,000 employees and 370 shops. By 1984 there were just 40 stores left. One newspaper awarded Black "self-inflicted corporate enemy of the year" award.

Similarly, when Black took over the *Telegraph* in 1985, he inherited an annual loss of £16.7 million, and set about – in his own fetching phrase – "drowning the kittens." The paper he bought had 3,900 employees; six years later there were only 1000. But the *Telegraph* turned a £29 million profit in 1988 and £41.5 million in 1989. The £67 million investment was entirely recouped in five years. It was, he said later, with typical Black humour, "not the sort of deal you get two of in a lifetime."

Siklos does succeed in capturing Black's attractive side – his lordly and impatient wit. Shortly after his marriage to Barbara Amiel, he conceded that she had upgraded his

**Shades of Black**  
by Richard Siklos  
Heinemann, £20

dress sense and talked him out of his fondness for Romanian suits. "She admires all fugitives from communism," he said, "but does not consider Romanian tailoring to be the best that's available." When they were doing up their glitzy Hampstead mansion, he did away with a kitsch "environmental chamber" which could blow hot or cold winds in your face. "It's not my style," he said, "to sit there trying to simulate a South Sea island."

Black has a good line in good lines, though Siklos does not remark on the slightly bullying snap behind many of them. Black is one of those men who prides himself on his forthrightness. "I've never minded a good verbal punch-up." What this seems to mean, in practice, is that Black enjoys being rude about others – he has an endearing habit of writing sharp letters to his own papers – while reserving the right to sue those who are rude about him. Even Siklos is forced to refer to the "libel chill" around Black. "It's a profit centre for me," chuckles the magnate. Oddly, Black did not sue the magazines who referred to him as Canada's most eligible bachelor in 1978, even though at the time he had a wife and child.

Obviously, the book lacks an ending – the story is not over yet. Siklos takes his leave with a classic watch-this-space gasp: "The goal," he writes, "is invincibility, it not immortality." It is hard to believe anyone could seriously save this idiotic line until last. Perhaps he thought it was a sly dig – that hint of hubris. If so, it's a fair point. Black ends up sounding like a Charles Kane wannabe, whose snappy airs feel brittle despite his great wealth and power. He acts and talks like the biggest beast in the jungle, but there's a big cool cat out there called Rupert Murdoch, whose sheer size makes Black look like an imposter.

Besides, for British readers the whole book is in a sense beside the point, since it has no interest in a huge, if parochial, question. How come two brassy and brilliant high-achievers from Australia and Canada have fought a long, fierce and seemingly personal dual for supremacy with Britain's newspapers? Last year's price-cutting war – a game of chicken for tycoons – cost the *Telegraph* alone £25 million in lost revenues in 1994, and the fall-out from the feud has tightened belts, nerves, and arteries in all other newspapers (especially this one). Is this a happy story about a great guy? It might be fun to watch cocks fighting, but not when it's our house they're smashing to bits in the process, not when it's our kittens they're drowning.



Like a noble patriarch contemplating destiny, Jerry Garcia plays guitar in a field of corn towards the end of his life. Starting as banjo-playing folkie, he metamorphosed into the craggy, perma-stoned "Captain Trips", the guru of Nighthawk at the start of the hippie revolution, then the profusely bearded and bearlike lead guitarist of the Grateful Dead and on to be the crazy, ancient inspirer of several thousand lost Deadheads. His spaced-out odyssey is charted in 'Garcia' (Little Brown, £20.00).

## Disaster at Cold comfort ferme

Love, death and Wodehousian frogs inform a Frenchified novel. By Louise Doughty

The term "Pinteresque" has long been a critical by-word for a certain sort of dramatic writing: terse, elliptical, saying a great deal with very few words. I would like to suggest a word which means the diametric opposite as applied to the British (no, English) novel: Brookneresque. Helen Stevenson's second book, *Windfall*, is a deal too Brookneresque, which is a great pity. At her best, Stevenson demonstrates acute insight into the nuances of human behaviour. At her worst, she is verbose and meandering.

In a French farmhouse, a young woman is convalescing after the death of a lover. Elizabeth is a Brookner character down to her perfect pink fingernails, waiting about in tea dresses like a "Jamesian heroine, a woman who has allowed herself no feelings". Her lover, Will, was a man who rolled his shirtsleeves "D.H. Lawrence-style". After nine months of mutual passion he has disappeared without trace – until, that is, his ashes turn up at a solicitor's office with a note saying that Elizabeth must scatter them.

The early stages of the book chart their affair, along with Elizabeth's relationship with the handsome, married Mark, who is none too pleased to be abandoned for Will. The first hundred pages are desperately slow and mawkish. Elizabeth has been allowed no feelings, it seems, as a short cut to making her seem enigmatic.

Redemption for this section comes in the form of the narrator, Marguerite, the old lady who owns the farmhouse where Elizabeth is staying. Marguerite is much more fun than her pale guest. She is bitter and funny – and prone to letting almost anybody stay in her house as long as they look like a *bona fide* emotional disaster area. One by one, more casualties arrive. Aiden Goodman is a schoolteacher on the run from his attraction to one of his pupils, the slutish but psychic Alicia. Christian is Marguerite's adoptive son, a pavement artist who has picked up a shaven-headed model in Paris who is married to a

**Windfall**

by Helen Stevenson  
Sceptre, £16.99

vicious film director – and so on.

The best sections of the novel are those concerning Aiden, who could be seen as a male equivalent of Elizabeth, not for the streak of snobbish nastiness which runs through his character. Stevenson is great at nastiness. When Alicia and a school friend giggle at Aiden in the classroom he lifts his head and pretends to be "insensible to the peck and worry of this tainted little world." He is a wonderful character, stiffly unpleasant and horribly convincing.

Throughout the book, there are sudden flashes of intelligence which make it clear the Stevenson has real potential. At night-time, the frogs in Marguerite's garden give out "irregular chuckles, as though reading Wodehouse tucked up in the flower beds". In a railway station bar, Mark gulps a full pint of beer, "the first gulp of the glass that always looks, thought Elizabeth, like a precaution, to stop things spilling over. There were some things that all men did the same." A description of a solicitor trying to mop up the tea he has spilt over his desk is a perfect, set-piece paragraph. The novel is scattered with such gems.

The problems lie in the narrative style and plot construction. The point of view swings wildly from character to character and the reader can never be quite sure why they are hearing from this particular individual at any given time. Towards the end, there is more in the way of event – someone falls down a mountain, a child is conceived. These incidents do not seem at all literal but they don't appear to represent much either – they are neither realistic nor truly symbolic. The overall impression is of an author of undeniable talent who has yet to find the right story to tell.

## Paperbacks

Reviewed by Emma Hagestadt and Christopher Hirst



**Good Benito** by Alan Lightman  
(Sceptre, £5.99)

Lab technicians headed for the bookstores when M.I.T. professor Alan Lightman's first novel *Einstein's Dreams* came out. His second – a sweet nerd-comes-of-age story set in suburban Memphis – shows that physicists too have a heart. Quirky and imaginative. But the very short sentences. Get on your nerves.



**Annet Margaret's Lover** by Mavis Cheek  
(Faber, £5.99)

On the death of her sister (whose body has ended up scattered all over the motorway) Margaret Percy selflessly devotes her life to caring for her niece. Then at the age of 39, decides it is time for a romantic adventure of her own. A little high on the "I'm nearly 40 and wearing a short skirt!" factor, but a yarn well spun none the less.



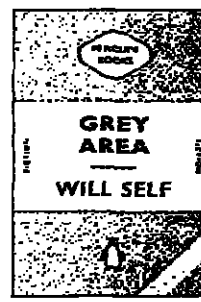
**The Love Letter** by Cathleen Schine  
(Sceptre, £5.99)

The residents of Pequot, New England, live in picture postcard white clapboards, jog on the beach and frequent Helen MacFarquar's bookstore. Captive to Helen's charms is a handsome college student and sure enough, 150 pages on, we are treated to pasta and some Mrs Robinson-type sex. Enjoyable schmalz.



**A Child of Air** by Alan Clews  
(Headline, £5.99)

Alan Clews's first novel is an old-fashioned ghost story of rolling mists, Scottish lairds, and something nasty behind the curtains. Returning to the remote village of Millarston for a family funeral, the book's narrator finally discovers the identity of the figure who haunted his childhood dreams. Cue roaring fires.



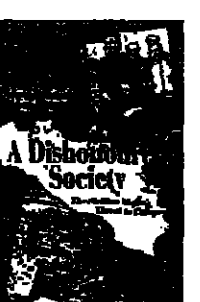
**Grey Area** by Will Self (Penguin, £6.99)

Will Self, like John Updike, is the kind of writer women should've spent too much time around. In his second collection of short stories, his cold eye ponders with clinical detachment their chaffing tights and dirty M & S underwear. Men will love these slick stories. Women will consider them a lot more cock and bull.



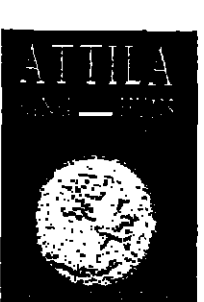
**Spies and Other Secrets** by Nicholas Bethell  
(Penguin, £7.99)

Bethell's extended "war against the Soviet System" did not begin well. His 1970 translation of *Cancer Ward* resulted in libel action against *Private Eye* (he won) and an angry disavowal by Solzhenitsyn (the edition remains in print). Later campaigns on behalf of dissidents had happier results. More case documentary than vivid memoir.



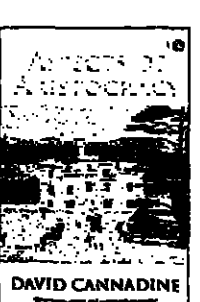
**A Dishonoured Society** by John Follain  
(Warner, £8.99)

A soberly related, gore-spattered indictment of the Mafia. In thrall to the Sicilian saying "Blood washes blood", the Cosa Nostra (as it is known to insiders) is obsessed by vengeance and deeply conservative – men whose mothers or sisters have had a lover are excluded – yet earns £5 billion a year from drugs alone and seems impervious to state control.



**Attila, King of the Huns** by Patrick Howarth  
(Constable, £9.95)

Enjoyable racy account of the 5th century nomad leader – a decent sort of chap apparently – who conquered a vast swathe of the Roman Empire from Orleans to Constantinople. Attila ruled for just eight years, dying not in war but of a burst artery sustained on his honeymoon night. A colourful cast of eunuchs and princesses emerges from this obscure period.



**Aspects of Aristocracy** by David Cannadine  
(Penguin, £7.99)

Impeccably sourced and researched, Cannadine's essays on the upper orders are fuelled by a deep distaste for the nostalgia and snobbery which permeate Britain today (he notes how our national airline calls business class "Club"). The reassessment of reputations is effective with, amongst others, Curzon and Churchill emerging in less than flattering light.



**Letters to a Young Politician** by Alister McAlpine  
(Faber, £6.99)

A curious epistolary concoction based on Machiavelli: a worldly-wise, cynical old hack dishes out political advice to his thrusting nephew who turns out to be even more cynical than he is. The polemic tone. It reveals much about the machinations of Westminster, but few outsiders will be able to read far without feelings of nausea.

## Audiobooks



**The Colour of Magic**  
read by Nigel Planer  
Poets for Pleasure  
read by Nicol Williamson, Douglas Hodge, T.P. McKenna

Deadening Terry Pratchett's Discworld novels could so easily be overplayed for laughs but Nigel Planer gets it absolutely right on the first unabridged recording of *The Colour of Magic* (Isis Audio Books, £19.99). Fairly good abridged Discworld tapes are available from Corgi, but Pratchett's books are short enough and the jokes good enough to hear in full.

Poetry is perfect material for audiotapes: easy to assimilate in bite-size chunks on short car journeys or at bedtime. *Poets for Pleasure* (Hodder Headline, 4 hrs, £17.01) has Nicol Williamson sounding a shade after-lunchish as he reads Blake, but Douglas Hodge does wonders for Keats and McKenna gives a crisp freshness to Yeats.

Christina Hardymont

## Who's reading whom?

Jeremy Isaacs has been sizing up Mrs Jordan's *Profession* by Claire Tomalin (Penguin)



Mrs Jordan, actress, mistress to the Duke of Clarence (to whom she bore 10 illegitimate children), enthralled and delighted audiences throughout her professional life and was endowed with such personality and such voice that managers fought to have her perform in their theatres. Claire Tomalin's book is particularly enlightening about theatre management in the 18th century where word of mouth was all in publicising productions. Striking too is the way impresarios listened closely to their audience about what was to be put on and who was to appear in it.



**Illustration: ANDREW KULMAN**

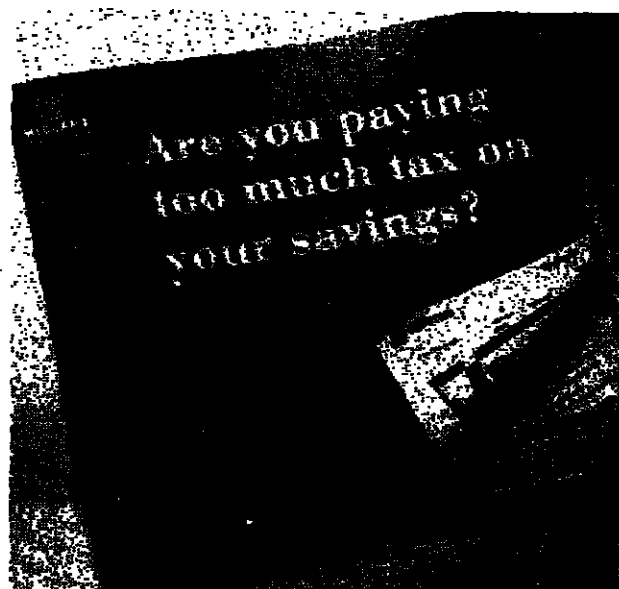
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If you've got savings then you're probably paying more tax than you need to - to give you some idea, the Inland Revenue generates around two billion pounds a year this way. Our booklet, written by independent journalists, takes you through some tax basics and explains how you can reduce tax through schemes such as Personal Equity Plans, TESSAs and personal pensions. It's available free of charge from any Midland branch or by calling us on **0800 65 65 65**

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## mortgages

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DEALS  
THEY  
OFFER

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Alliance & Leicester: New fixed rates this week include 1.95% for 1 year, 4.89 for 2 years, 6.70% for 3 years, max loan 95%.

**BRADFORD & BINGLEY**

Bradford & Bingley Direct: The standard variable rate is cut by 0.25% to 7.24% for new and existing borrowers.

**Britannia**

Britannia: First time buyer rate 4.74% for a year, max loan 95%, 3% loan rebate, free unemployment insurance, no valuation fee.

# How to be a winner in

In the increasingly fierce war to provide home loans, an eye for a bargain can help slash hundreds of pounds off the cost of your mortgage. Nic Cicutti looks at the background to the battle, spells out what it means for you and highlights the most attractive deals on offer

A smell of cordite is wafting across the mortgage battlefield, as lenders fire fresh broadsides in the increasingly fierce war to provide cheap home loans to their borrowers. Uppermost in their minds is the question of whether they can slash their rates enough to win homebuyers into their camp. There is a second imperative for lenders, that of how to prevent their

own camp-followers from deserting to the other side. For millions of borrowers, the question is different: if there is a mortgage war going on, how can they win it? What spoils can they gain out of it? Make no mistake about it, there is a war taking place. The victors are those lenders able to snaffle away customers from under the noses of their rivals while losing the least numbers in return.

For you, it means a careful assessment of your individual position; an eye for a bargain can help slash hundreds of pounds off the annual cost of your mortgage.

The first thing to understand is why mortgage lenders have been forced into a war. There are several factors to consider. Probably the most significant is the state of the housing market. House prices have collapsed in many areas and are up to 25 per cent lower than in the heady days of the late 1980s.

This week's detailed survey from Nationwide highlighted the scale of the problem. The building society released figures showing that 1.7 million borrowers - one in seven of all homebuyers - are in negative equity, where their mortgages are greater than the value of the property. Equally worrying is the fact that for one million more borrowers the equity in their property - the margin between the mortgage and the value of the house - is less than £3,500. If you fall into this category, and want to move, you can't do so without going into the red.

This block on people's ability to purchase another home, affecting one in four of all mortgage-holders, is also a tremendous obstacle for lenders trying to persuade fresh generations of homebuyers into the market. Think about it. You save a few thousand pounds over the years. The money earns you a tidy, though not particularly generous, amount of interest in a building society account.

Then someone comes to you and offers to lend you money to buy a pile of bricks that will only fall in value over the years. What is more, you must also assign the amount you have saved up to the same pile. Does this seem a good deal to you?

Hardly surprisingly, the house-buying enthusiasm of people in their early 20s has gone into dramatic reverse in the past five years. Everyone knows a horror story about a friend, or a friend of a friend, who bought in 1988 or 1989 and handed in their house keys a few years later. Although lenders say that things are getting better, 1,000 people a week are still having their homes repossessed. Many tens of thousands are in heavy arrears, with no hope of paying their loans off.

In the 1980s, mortgage lenders, primarily building societies, hardly had to worry where their next punter came from. All of them were able to lend as much as they chose to. Some did so with a vengeance and paid the price. Nowadays, things are not looking so good for them. Far from people beating a path to their door, they are staying away. In fact, last year new house purchases fell to a low not seen since the first price collapse in 1990-91.

An additional side-effect of the prevailing uncertainty in many people's minds is that they are not so keen to speculate in the wide range of unit trusts and other investments so popular until just a year or two ago. The result has been a flood of money pouring into building society coffers, money which societies are desperate to lend again. If only there were some takers.

What is a lender to do? The answer is to behave as any other business does. If price is seen as one of the obstacles preventing people from buying, you cut that price. For most lenders it means cutting the cost of a home loan. Their strategy has been helped by the Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the past few months, he has twice reduced base rates by a total of 0.5 per cent. In turn, this has allowed lenders to cut the cost of their loans. What is significant is that they have not only matched Mr Clarke pound for pound but have slashed their mortgage rates by up to 1 per cent since September. The effect of this for existing mortgage borrowers has been to cut the cost of an average £50,000 loan fall by up to £40 a month.

That's not all. De-mutualisation fever has gripped millions of members of the top 10 building societies. Most of them stand to gain from the £15bn share or cash bonanza being

handed out, as one society after another prepares to float on the stock market.

For those societies still wedded to the concept of mutuality, or too small to seek bank status, the solution is to offer their members the benefits that mutuality is supposed to bring. This means cheaper mortgages and better savings rates as "loyalty bonuses" - basically keeping their members sweet by forgoing a slice of their profits. In the case of Bradford & Bingley, it is handing back £50m to its members a year by cutting 0.25 per cent off its variable rate to 7.24 per cent. Yorkshire Building Society is handing back £20m. Its own rate now stands at a reasonably competitive 7.39 per cent. It could be argued that they should have done so sooner. Even so, the fact that they are moving at last is good news for their members.

The consequence of such bonuses, soon to be announced by Nationwide, Britannia, Skipton and just about everyone else, has opened an intriguing and highly significant new front in the mortgage war. By handing their profits back to savers and borrowers, building societies are in effect challenging the "neo-banks" to follow. They will almost certainly have to if they are to remain competitive. But for a public company to do so means cutting into its profits and its shareholders' dividends. Hence the squeals of anguish from existing shareholders, who are dumping their holdings in Abbey National and other banks. A war always has some unexpected casualties.

There is a final factor to bear in mind - mortgages by telephone. In the past two years, a number of lenders have set up telephone lending operations. By cutting out their expensive branch networks, they can offer the attraction of cheap mortgages. Some of these operations are bogus. If you call, you will be directed back to the society's local branch, or the mortgage rate you are offered is no different from that already available in the high street.

But in the past week both Bradford & Bingley and Direct Line, the staggeringly successful telephone insurance operation, have opened hostilities on a new mortgage salient. Direct Line started it by dropping its variable rate to 6.49 per cent. B&B replied within hours, reducing its own rate to 6.25 per cent, the cheapest now available.

Another new telephone lender, FirstMortgage, operates slightly differently. It offers a far wider choice of loans, ranging from fixed to discounted rates. It also guarantees that after the fixed period ends - in two or three years' time - it will place borrowers on to a rate which is one-quarter per cent lower than the average of that available from the top five building societies.

At present, all of these players are minnows. Their combined lending last year totalled barely £1bn, compared with the billions lent by conventional societies. But just as telephone insurance was derided 10 years ago and now dominates the market for motor and household cover, telephone mortgages are likely to become a key force by the end of the decade.

All these competitive forces are good news for borrowers. They mean that in their desperation to attract new business, lenders are also offering a plethora of special deals.

So what kind of loan should you go for? The answer is that there is no single best mortgage that will suit everyone. It depends on your needs and where you see the market going in the next two years or so, the furthest it is really safe to predict rates for.

The arguments above point to one conclusion, which is that mortgages are likely to remain at their current low levels or to fall further over the coming year. The experts believe that in a low-inflation climate, and with the economy slowing down, the pressure will be on Kenneth Clarke to keep base rates as low as he can. This means that mortgages will also stay low.

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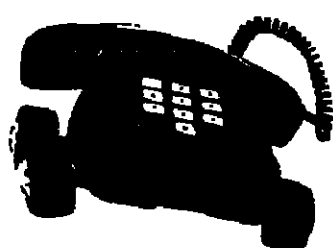
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Direct Line-standard variable rate is reduced by 0.21% to 6.49%, for both new and existing borrowers.



Northern Rock: fixed rates 4.24% for 2 years, 6.24% for 3 years; an extra 0.25% off with the Society's buildings and contents insurance.

# er in the home loans war

## TEN THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MORTGAGES

1. You don't have to buy a property or move house to get a mortgage bargain. You simply remortgage and repay your old loan.
2. The best bargain offers will usually lend borrowers only 75 per cent or less of valuation - that's the value their surveyor puts on your property.
3. Some lenders, especially the telephone-based ones, offer loans at standard variable rates below the general market rate.
4. Special offers give a choice between a fixed rate, a discount on the normal mortgage rate for a set period, or a cash rebate, usually a percentage of your loan.
5. A fixed-rate mortgage commits you whether variable rates rise or fall.
6. If you accept a special offer you will be penalised if you want to move lenders again within a specific time.
7. The penalty period could well be longer than the cheap rate lasts.
8. Remortgages usually involve other costs, survey fees, solicitor's fees, search fees, and compulsory house and contents insurance.
9. If you repay an old loan early it usually pays to do so at the end of a month, not the start.
10. Negative equity disqualifies you from most if not all special offers.

Of course, all such predictions must be taken with a pinch of salt. Barely 15 months ago, these same experts were confidently predicting that interest rates were set to rise up to 9 per cent or more. The consequence of that prediction was that it was virtually impossible a year ago to fix your mortgage for five years at a rate of less than 8.5 per cent.

Let's assume that this time they are right, at least for the next year or so. In that case, it makes sense for you to opt for a discounted mortgage. This is where a lender cuts several percentage points off the variable rate and promises to keep that discount for, say, two or three years. If the variable rate falls, the cost of your loan drops by the same amount. A two-year gamble on falling rates makes eminent sense in such circumstances.

Moneyfacts, which charts all the mortgage deals available on the market, singles out Northern Rock, for its discount of 6.25 per cent off its variable rate until May 1997. You pay just 1.19 per cent over that period. Thereafter you move onto the society's variable rate, currently 7.44 per cent. For that you must take out Northern Rock's own home and contents insurance policies.

First-time buyers, who traditionally face difficulties with the cost of decorating and furnishing their properties, may be attracted by another deal from Britannia Building Society. This offers a 2.75 per cent discount in the first year, giving an actual mortgage rate of 4.74 per cent. However, the society also rebates back 3 per cent of the sum borrowed, up to £6,000, provides free unemployment insurance for one year and refunds the valuation fee, up to £400.

Alternatively, FirstMortgage has a three-year deal, giving a discount of 2.25 per cent on a variable rate of 7.49 per cent. Over two years, the discount mounts to 3.25 per cent.

Discounts may not suit everyone - especially those who prefer to know exactly how much they must pay each month rather than cope with changing repayments. Coventry Building Society this week offered a fixed rate of 3.9 per cent over two years. Over four years, the rate is 6.7 per cent. Five-year fixes are priced at 6.79 per cent, which is probably the cheapest now available.

One crucial fact to remember is that when you take out a fixed or discounted loan it is usually impossible to walk away from it. If rates were

to fall, or rise, you are tied to that mortgage by means of hefty redemption penalties of as much as six months' interest. If you opt for a fixed or discounted deal, you will incur penalties for several years after switching back to the variable rate.

That may not matter. After all, if you are re-mortgaging the chances are that you were on the variable rate anyway. But it may also mean that if more tasty deals come up in a year's time, you will be excluded from applying. The consequence of such a decision can be expensive. There are still cases of borrowers who, frightened by rates at 14 per cent plus in the early 1990s, opted for five-year deals at 12 per cent. They have paid heavily for their decision. Coventry does not apply redemption penalties at present. Nor does FirstMortgage, on some of its mortgage products.

The key point to remember is that if the only reason you choose a discount or a mortgage is because you want to gamble on rates, the chances are 50-50 that you will be wrong.

Try thinking of it as a budget planning exercise: pick a rate so that you know how much your repayments will be a few years hence rather than taking a punt on the money markets.

There are two final questions to which any prospective homeowner wants the answer. Is this the right time to buy? And if you buy a house, what guarantee is there that its value won't have plummeted over the next decade? There isn't one. House prices are at their lowest for many years, making them a bargain compared to the late 1980s. Mortgages are also low.

Despite the experts' confident predictions, however - which take in pent-up demand, the shortage of good house-building land, growing numbers of single-parent families and all the rest - the fact is that there is simply no way of knowing whether the current aversion to home purchase is a permanent phenomenon or if it is working its way out. Remember, the experts have all been wrong before.

If you buy a home, it must be because you want a particular type of roof over your head rather than the rented accommodation you are in. In that context, house price rises or falls are immaterial. If you do decide to buy, take care and shop around carefully. You are likely to end up a winner in the war rather than just another casualty.



At home with the Rutledges: Tony Rutledge, his son Paul, 13, and the family dog, Max

Photograph: Ian Pert

## Case study The Rutledge family

Tony and Judy Rutledge bought their house on the Isle of Wight five years ago with a mortgage from Nationwide - but a friendly local insurance broker suggested last month that they should remortgage with Northern Rock and take advantage of a rebate of 6 per cent of the outstanding mortgage, worth in their case more than £2,500. There would be no survey fee, and the solicitor's fee of £300 to transfer the mortgage and the arrangement fee of £295 could be deducted from the cashback, leaving them with £2,000 clear.

On the basis that nothing is for nothing, Tony asked a few questions, but the offer seems genuine enough and compares well with others currently available.

They will have to repay the cashback if they want to change lenders again within six years and they will be paying Northern Rock's variable mortgage rate, currently 7.44 per cent. This is not the cheapest available - for example, Bradford & Bingley's is 6.25 per cent - but the cashback is just as good value and it is upfront. They could have chosen a 6.25 per cent discount on the interest rate for a year instead of the 6 per cent cashback, but that would reduce the MIRAS tax-relief as well as the interest bill. The Inland Revenue toyed last year with the idea of taxing cashbacks but has now accepted that they are not liable to tax.

Northern Rock's buildings and contents insurance may not be the best value, but it is not compulsory - and there is a 0.25 per cent discount on the mortgage rate if they do take it.

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# investments

Sicavs, Oeics or traditional UK unit trusts? Investors in mutual funds will soon have a wider choice of domestic or international products

For the first time ever the UK mutual fund industry will soon be able to market a standard investment product which it can sell in every country in Europe. If it succeeds it could open up a market six times the size of the UK.

Next July will see the expected launch of the first open-ended investment vehicle (Oeic) in the UK. 10 years after an EU directive set down a framework for the cross-border marketing of funds throughout the Community.

The essential difference between an Oeic and a unit trust is that shares in Oeics will have a single price for both purchases and sales, making them much more user-friendly.

They will be pooled investment vehicles operating in a similar way to unit trusts but with a corporate structure rather than one based on trust law. In this way Britain will be falling more into line with a structure that is fast becoming the norm in other markets.

Within the EU, for example, there are already close to 7,000 funds aimed at retail investors, up more than 25 per cent on a year ago. Some 4,000 of these are domestic funds authorised for sale

only in their country of origin but at least 2,500 are registered as foreign funds and as such may be sold in at least one other country outside their domicile.

Luxembourg accounts for more than three-quarters of funds sold across EU borders. Frustrated by the slowness of the UK authorities in allowing investment products to be priced, packaged and taxed in a way that is more appealing to foreign as well as to domestic investors, the UK investment industry has been seeking its own remedies.

In the last few years several leading groups – Fidelity, Flemings and Templeton among them – have been steadily taking advantage of the options available in other centres. In Luxembourg, for example, Templeton has no fewer than 21 separate funds within its Global Strategy Sicav (Société d'Investissement à Capital Variable).

These are open-ended investment funds – in other words they can attract new money at any time – which are already registered for sale in a number of other European countries, including the UK. While tax advantages are regularly cited as one of the reasons



DOUGLAS ADAMS INVESTMENTS

fund management groups choose so-called offshore centres such as Luxembourg to extend their range of wares, the more potent explanation is that the fund industry has to become more global if it is to meet the burgeoning needs of the market. With Oeics London has a chance to catch up and exploit its management skills.

The pace of change is likely to result in the further dismantling of restrictions and a greater commonality in the rules governing investment in different countries.

Just as we have seen a trend to freer trade in manufactured products, so we are likely to see the market for tradeable services like investment management open up.

It took 40 years for the motor industry to become truly global. A global fund industry with similar products sold throughout the world is in my view no more than 10 years away. And as that reality dawns so the remaining barriers that prevent this global trade at the moment – as much psychological as physical – will disappear. The result will be better, more cost-effective products.

My confidence is not confined to the strongly held belief that investors will demand greater choice. It recognises the increasing tendency, as people live longer and impose additional strain on national finances, for governments to encourage them to save or invest more for their own retirement.

Mutual funds offer one of the most efficient ways of doing this, particularly if the investment scope of the funds is made as wide as possible, so minimising risk over the medium to long term.

The preference of investors to buy products from familiar domestic

names is often seen as a reason why the fund industry will not globalise. But this has not been the case in other industries where the international firm has localised its product sufficiently in terms of language and service and the currency in which it is priced. Progressive fund companies are doing this already and with encouraging results.

It remains to be seen how many unit trusts will convert to Oeics. Those groups already offering a wide range of products through Sicavs – in addition to their existing unit trusts in the UK – may opt to wait and see how the new market develops.

This way they will be giving their investors the choice of remaining with the old-style unit trust or moving into the Sicavs. Others, particularly those less well established outside the UK, may be tempted to make the switch.

The Government has stated that the procedure for converting an existing unit trust to an Oeic will be relatively simple. Trust managers will ask unit holders to vote on the move and no tax penalties will be imposed. The deciding factor for some groups may be

whether they wish to market shares in Europe where, of course, Oeics are the most common vehicle.

Either way, the UK Oeic can only add to the variety of investment products on offer, to the ultimate benefit of consumers and the eventual goal of a global investment market.

For the dynamics of the investment fund industry dictate that, in the not so long term, both funds that are domiciled in the UK and those that are not will be considered alike. Why set up clone funds in every market when it is more efficient to spread fixed costs, including investment management resources, by selling the same fund product in a number of markets? Given the changes that are already taking place, we can look forward to a future in which the preference for domestically 'produced' investment funds disappears, and the more important attributes of product performance, image, and reputation for delivery, service and reliability combine to take pride of place.

Douglas Adams is marketing director of Templeton Investment Management Ltd.

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## Thinking of setting up your own portfolio? Private investors, start here

By Justin Urquhart-Stewart

Unit trusts, investment trusts, PEPs and privatisation issues have made it very easy for investors to acquire a stake in the stock market. And there are plenty of private client stockbrokers happy to build and manage a portfolio of direct holdings for the idle investor who still wants direct exposure.

But there is still room for the private investor. Starting a portfolio can be quite straightforward as long as you stick to some golden rules.

Your goals will depend on your circumstances according to age, personal life and wishes. I would write down a list of three. Firstly, how much do I want to achieve by way of income or growth.

Secondly, by when do I wish to achieve this, and lastly, what level of risk I am willing to take.

Risk is a vital issue to consider. For example, I could not sleep at night knowing that all my investments could disappear overnight, but if you felt that you wanted that level of risk then so be it. Risk is a balance of comfort and fear.

Before starting up a portfolio I feel it is vital that potential investors ensure that their home base is covered first – that, for instance, home, pension and suitable insurance are already in place. Often, long-term savings and investment plans should be allowed to continue, but only when you are happy with your level of security in your family nest should you embark on your own portfolio.

One of the best ways to start building up a portfolio is with friends in an investment club. Here a group of up to 20 people can pool say £25 each month into an account and start investing as a group. Once you have built up some experience you can then use the knowledge gained in the club to start your own portfolio.

When starting to invest directly yourself, for starters I would consider at least £5,000. Each investment should be no lower than £1,000, and so this would give you the chance initially to spread your money over six companies.

Learning about the market can be done in several ways. There are legions of books on investment form the basic to the most sophisticated.

There has been a growth in the number of magazines aimed directly at the private investor.

Other points of knowledge include Proshare, a body set up especially to help investors who can provide a wealth of information.

You will need to find a stockbroker who provides



Acquiring a stake in the stock market has become easy with Peps and unit trusts

you with the right level of service for your needs. Here you behave like any other consumer and shop around. There are all sorts of combinations of advisory and execution-only brokers who have differing services for you.

Some will have nominee services where they can handle the certificates for you and others also offer a range of personal equity plans (PEPs).

As many of us are taxpayers it is worth considering setting up a self-select PEP for your portfolio. This will allow you to shelter your investments from both income and capital gains tax.

Consider your own needs when choosing a broker. Are you happy using the phone? You will probably want some help and information at some stage, as well as opinions on companies and even advice from time to time. You may want 24-hour access to your portfolio.

If you want your portfolio to grow and develop, it is vital to set aside time regularly so that you can monitor and adjust as necessary. This must, in my view, mean at least a weekly review but the important issue is to ensure that it fits into your schedule well so that you can commit the time.

Before embarking on any investments I believe that it is essential that you have a set of guidelines to work to. For example, you can set yourself a limit of 20 per cent rise on a share after which you will sell it and bank the profits.

Equally, if the share goes down by 10 per cent you could automatically sell out.

Consider the types of investments you want to have, by geography, industry type, size and spread. With so much choice, it is important to focus on these key points to avoid over or under investing.

Never fall in love with a particular investment – it doesn't love you. If you have made a mistake, then out it. Good luck.

Justin Urquhart-Stewart is Business Planning Director at Barclays Stockbrokers

مكتبة من الأناص



# Provide for the best years of your life

The plethora of investment policies on offer today can confuse even the best-informed. Anthony Bailey guides you through the minefield and offers tips about the best buys for taxpayers

A life insurance policy in its purest form is a way of protecting the dependants of a policyholder against an untimely death. A straight-forward term policy pays out a cash sum if you die within the term – for example, 10 or 20 years. If you survive the term, you get nothing.

But investment-linked life insurance holds out the prospect of getting something back for your money. And many plans offer relatively little actual insurance. Policies come in various forms. The endowment policy to back a mortgage is probably the most familiar. But there are also stand-alone, unit-linked savings plans and single-premium investment bonds for lump-sum investment that can invest in a wide range of assets. The coupling of investment with insurance is largely historical and in the past there were tax allowances on the premiums. But for the most part, these have long since gone.

"We don't recommend life insurance-based investments products very often," says Tim Cockerill of Whitechurch Securities. "As financial advisers we always look first at unit trusts, investment trusts and PEPs. In most situations, they are most suitable for our clients."

He reckons that the typical unit-linked 10-year life insurance policy simply does not stand up to comparison with unit and investment trusts savings plans, especially if they are held in a tax-free PEP.

"Unit and investment trusts give much greater flexibility. You can increase or decrease monthly payments, switch between different funds and you are not locked in."

But it is not only the rigidity of unit-linked life policies that counts against them. This in itself is not a problem for those who last the course. "At the end of the period you are probably going to get a half-decent return. But almost certainly if you choose a unit or investment trust instead you will make more money,"

says Mr Cockerill. More powerful arguments are to do with cost and tax-efficiency. Charges on life insurance policies are invariably greater than on unit trusts and PEPs, not least because of the greater commission paid to the sales rep. The commission factor is what makes life company sales reps so keen to sell their wares – despite an investor protection regime designed to guard against the selling of inappropriate investments.

Sales reps may make the tax-free nature of a policy's eventual payout a big part of the sales puff. But while investors pay no tax on qualifying policies, the investment returns within the fund have been subject to income tax and capital gains tax. By contrast, there is no tax on unit and investment trusts held within a PEP.

But if there are strong arguments against using a life policy for regular savings, does the same apply to lump sums put into insurance-based investment bonds? The tax arguments are again paramount.

Graham Hooper, of Chase de Vere, says: "A

company may run two funds, one a unit trust, one an investment bond. If the underlying assets are identical, the underlying unit trust is going to do better because the unit trust doesn't pay capital gains tax internally."

There may be a benefit to some higher rate taxpayers who also use up their annual capital gains tax exemption – £6,000 in the current tax year. Against this possible tax advantage you have to weigh any extra charges on a bond investment compared with a unit trust.

One popular variety of investment bond may have a place. With-profits bonds are designed to iron out stock market fluctuations. As such, they can appeal to more cautious investors. "They have a lower risk profile than unit trusts. They may suit people who want a better return than cash on deposit, but the return will still be lower than a good unit or investment trust," says Tim Cockerill.

Another widely held variety of bond is the distribution bond. These aim to provide a higher income than the building society deposit

and the possibility of some capital growth. Mr Hooper says: "We would recommend a distribution bond for people who want a growing income and stability."

He acknowledges the tax disadvantages, but likes the market leading bond from Sun Life largely because of its track record. "The product may be suitable for people who use the building society rather than the equity markets as a yardstick."

And it is the performance of Sun Life's £3bn distribution fund that the company's marketing manager, Keith Middleton, sees as the main selling point. He willingly recognises some of the drawbacks. "The advantages are gradually being eroded. People should look at unit trust PEPs, with their greater flexibility. But PEPs do have an annual investment limit of £6,000, which is too low for many investors."

He also says the concept of a managed fund – with less emphasis on shares and more on gilts and other fixed interest investments – is harder to find among unit trusts.



A life insurance policy in its purest form is a way of protecting dependants against untimely death

## Savings accounts may have lost their charm, so try the insurers

By Alicia Wylie

With savings rates from building societies having fallen through the floor since their peak of 14 per cent in 1990, savers have been forced to look elsewhere for a good level of income or growth.

But many investors are still nervous of the higher returns but greater volatility provided via the stock market, and so "guaranteed" products have attracted a major new class of middle-ground investors.

Insurance companies have been offering products which guarantee a level of capital security and better returns than traditional deposit accounts for many years.

These have traditionally taken the form of guaranteed income bonds or guaranteed growth bonds. They are single-premium life assurance policies which offer either a relatively high fixed income on a regular basis or reinvest the income to provide capital growth over a fixed term ranging from one to five years.

Amanda Webster, director of marketing and development at Save & Prosper, commented: "Those seeking guaranteed income are typically pre-retired and basic rate tax payers while those looking for growth are more likely to be younger and higher rate taxpayers."

"Both groups are currently risk-averse, possibly as a result of a bad investment experience, fear of job loss and the general feel-bad factor."

Returns on guaranteed bonds improve the longer investors are willing to tie their cash up for and compare well against deals on offer from banks and building societies.

GAN Life is currently offering monthly income of 3.54 per cent for investments between £5,000 and £4,999 tied up for one year, rising to 4.47 per cent a month on investments tied up for five years, while AIG Life is offering monthly income on a one-year bond ranging from 4.43 per cent on an investment of £5,000 to 4.76 per cent on investments over £50,000. Over five years, the rates range from 4.47 per cent to 5.55 per cent.

Reliance Mutual is presently offering growth of 29.15 per cent fixed over five years for investments of £5,000, rising to 22.25 per cent over five years for investments of £20,000, while Pinnacle Insurance is offering a fixed return of 35.09 per cent on an investment of £3,000 over five years.

Bonds linked to the performance of specific stock market indices have become increasingly popular, particularly with the more financially sophisticated investor, although there is a risk to either your capital or your income.

The Manor Park Guaranteed Income Fund (series 1) pays an income of 8 per cent guaranteed for five years plus the return of 100 per cent of the initial investment provided the FTSE 100 index grows by an average of 1.3 per cent a year.

Alan Williams, director of Manor Park, says: "Demand from investors for income generating products continues to be strong, particularly with interest rates on cash deposits at low levels. Many investors remain suspicious of investments linked to the performance of the stock market as they are fearful of losing money."

"But it only requires the market to rise by historically modest proportions for the investor to enjoy both income and the return of the original capital."

Stock market-linked high-income bonds are also on offer from EuroLife – which is offering income of 10 per cent a year or growth of 60 per cent over five years and Save & Prosper, which is offering an annual income of 10 per cent net for five years, quarterly income of 2.4 per cent net for five years or accumulated income of 65 per cent net after five and a half years.

Save & Prosper is currently offering a Japanese guaranteed stock market bond. Providing 120 per cent of the average growth of the Japanese market which is widely expected to rise in 1996 – over 3.5 years with a minimum capital return of 100 per cent.



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# aving and borrowing

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<b>INSTANT ACCESS</b>					
Portman BS	01202 292444	Instant Access	Instant	£100	4.80
Skipton BS	01756 700511	High Street	Instant	£2,500	5.10
Co-operative Bank	0345 252000	Pathfinder	Instant	£5,000	5.37
<b>INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS</b>					
Fitzell Bank	0800 373191	Prosperity	Postal	£2,500	5.60
Bristol & West BS	0800 303330	Direct Savings	Postal	£5,000	5.75
Bristol & West BS	0800 303330	Direct Savings	Postal	£10,000	5.80
<b>NOTICE ACCOUNTS &amp; BONDS</b>					
C&G	0500 246810	Direct 30	30 day P	£1,000	6.50
C&G	0500 246810	Direct 30	30 day P	£10,000	6.75
C&G	0500 246810	Direct 30	30 day P	£25,000	7.10
<b>MONTHLY INTEREST</b>					
Co-operative Bank	0345 252000	Pathfinder	Instant	£5,000	5.37
Scottish Widows Bank	0345 829829	Instant Access	Instant	£25,000	5.79
C&G	0500 246810	Direct 30	30 day P	£10,000	6.55
<b>FIXED RATE BONDS</b>					
West Bromwich BS	0121 680 8024	Guaranteed Growth	31/1/97	£5,000	6.80F
Fitzell Bank	0800 373191	Fixed Rate	2 yr bond	£2,500	6.75F
Fitzell Bank	0800 373191	Fixed Rate	3 yr bond	£2,500	7.00F
<b>CHEQUE ACCOUNTS</b>					
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	Higher Rate Deposit	Instant	£1,000	5.25
Robert Fleming/S&P	01202 502404	HICA	Instant	£2,500	5.50
Alliance & Leicester BS	0116 271 7272	Alliance	Instant	£5,000	5.00
Northern Rock BS	0500 505000	Current A/C Gold	Instant	£10,000	5.27
<b>GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (GIBs)</b>					
Premium Life	0800 414111	1 year	£1,000	4.50FN	Year
Premium Life	0800 414111	2 year	£1,000	4.85FN	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	3 year	£20,000	5.10FN	Year
<b>OFFSHORE (gross)</b>					
Northern Rock, Guern	01481 714600	Offshore Instant	Instant	£25,000	6.70
Skipton, Guernsey Ltd	01481 727374	Guernsey 60	60 day	£25,000	6.75
Portman CI Ltd	01481 822747	Gold Plus	90 day	£5,000	6.45
<b>NATIONAL SAVINGS Accounts &amp; Bonds (gross) 1995-1996</b>					
Investment Account	1 month	£20	£20	5.25	Year
			£500	5.75	Year
			£25,000	6.00	Year
Income Bond	3 month		£2,000	6.50	Month
			£25,000	6.75	Month
Capital Bond	Series 1	5 year	£100	6.65 F	Maturity
First Option Bond		12 month	£1,000	6.25 F	Year
			£20,000	6.50 F	Year
Pensioner's Guaranteed Income Bond	Series 3	5 year	£500	7.00 F	Month
NS Certificates (tax-free)					
43rd issue		5 year	£100	5.35 F	Maturity
5th Index Linked		5 year	£100	2.50 + RPI	Maturity
Children's Bond	Issue H	5 year	£25	6.75 F	Maturity

P: post only

F: fixed rate

N: net rate

All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice.

MONEYFACTS 01632 500677

1 February 1996

## Best borrowing rates

Telephone	% Rate and period	Max adv %	Fee	Incentive	Redemption penalty
<b>MORTGAGES</b>					
<b>Fixed rates</b>					
Scarborough BS	0800 590547	0.25 for 1 year	70	0.75% —	1st 5 yrs: 7.24% of sum repaid
Coventry BS	0800 126125	3.95 to 1/5/98	85	£250 —	To 1/5/01: 6mth interest
<b>Variable rates</b>					
Scarborough BS	0800 590547	1.09 for 1 year	95	—	£150 cash rebate
Halifax BS	01422 333333	3.99 to 30/4/98	90	—	Free valuation
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	4.44 to 1/5/99	95	—	Refund valuation fee
<b>First time buyers fixed rates</b>					
Bristol & West BS	0800 100117	0.95 to 31/1/97	90	£275 —	To 31/1/01: 8/6 mths int
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	5.99 to 1/3/99	95	£295 —	1st 6 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
<b>First time buyers variable rates</b>					
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	1.19 to 1/5/97	90	—	Refund valuation fee
NatWest Home Lns	0121 234 8011	4.39 for 2 years	90	—	£300 cash rebate
<b>PERSONAL LOANS</b>					
<b>Unsecured</b>					
Direct Line	0141 248 9966	14.90E	—	—	Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 years)
Midland Bank	0800 180180	15.40	—	—	With insurance
<b>Secured (second charge)</b>					
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	8.60	Max LTV	—	Advance
Royal Bank of Scotland	Via branch	9.30	70%	—	£3K - £15K
<b>OVERDRAFTS</b>					
<b>Woolwich BS</b>					
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.76	9.5	2.18
Alliance & Leicester BS	0500 959595	Alliance	0.76	9.5	2.20
<b>CREDIT CARDS</b>					
<b>Standard</b>					
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	0.946	11.80
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	1.00	14.60
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 161616	MasterCard	—	1.14	14.50
<b>Gold cards</b>					
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Visa	£20,000	0.5208M	10.80
Royal Bank of Scotland	01702 362880	Visa	£20,000	1.05	14.50
<b>STORE CARDS</b>					
<b>John Lewis</b>					
John Lewis	Via store	—	—	1.39	18.00
Marks and Spencer	01244 681681	1.67A	24.80	1.97A	26.30

APR: Annual percentage rate.

E: 1.55% (21.5% APR) for rate over £1K.

C: Available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged over 22 years.

H: Annual fee waived after first year if EMI+ charged to card during previous year.

All rates subject to change without notice.

MONEYFACTS 01632 500677

1 February 1996

## FEAR OF FINANCE

Clifford German



The mists obscuring the future of the building society movement are slowly clearing and the Alliance & Leicester may well jump the queue to convert to banking status — ahead of the merged Halifax and Leeds societies, and the Woolwich which announced an independent float next month.

The Nationwide is now the only remaining building society big enough to convert into a bank and stand alone in competition with the big seven UK-based banks. Nationwide's management has been consistently critical of a move to banking status, for what that is worth, and is reported to be close to following the Bradford & Bingley by upping rates to savers and reducing rates to borrowers. That would have the effect of giving away profits and accumulated reserves, making the society less attractive to predators — and also less able to pay fat bribes to persuade members to vote for conversion in future.

But until and unless it is able not just to announce but also to implement that strategy fully Nationwide will remain vulnerable to a hostile bid, in the same way that Cheltenham & Gloucester had no defence against an unwanted bid from Lloyds Bank last year. Bradford & Bingley remains vulnerable until it has significantly run down its reserves and that will only happen slowly.

Even the Woolwich and the A&L could face hostile bids which could upset the apparent before they get to market. There may well be method in the madness of

Peter White, the A&L's chief executive in refusing to reveal, for the time being at least, exactly what he is willing to offer to savers and borrowers to win their approval, in case he tells a potential predator exactly what terms he has to beat. Bidders would presumably have to make members a more attractive offer than they are likely to get from their own management but it is not an impossible prospect.

Other smaller societies from the number five downwards are almost certainly too small to float as banks. But they may still need to merge to stay competitive at a time when mortgage lending remains sluggish and lending margins are being progressively squeezed. Some of them may also look attractive as takeover targets in the eyes of UK and foreign banks looking to buy mortgage market share.

The mortgage market may look depressed at present but it can hardly get much lower, in volume or in value. Building societies also have substantial captive markets for savers, which will not disappear overnight while the banks have such a poor image for personal service. Societies also have plenty of scope for rationalisation.

The most obvious speculative investments in building society membership may well have gone, and the entry threshold in many cases has risen well above the statutory minimum of £100 for a saver. But the opportunities for such speculation have not disappeared completely.

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\*Source: Moneypol, cited to bid, gross income reinvested in 1.1.96. If you call Fidelity and you receive advice this will only relate to the products offered by Fidelity Investment Services Ltd or a member of its marketing group. Past performance is no guarantee of future returns. The value of units and income from them may go down as well as up and an investor may not get back the amount invested. They are subject to future market movements and the value of tax savings and eligibility to invest in a PEP will depend on individual circumstances. The MoneyBuilder range consists of the MoneyBuilder Index and Income Funds, Fidelity Cash Trusts and Fidelity MoneyBuilder All of which are managed by Fidelity Investment Services Limited. All companies within the Fidelity marketing group are regulated by (IMRO) and the Personal Investment Authority which are regulated by Fidelity Investment Services Limited. \*Estimated gross income calculated on 2.1.96. Redemptions held in 7.1.96. \*Gross estimated Compound Annual Rate (CAR) as at 2.1.96 assuming income reinvested. Net CAR 4.5%. Issued by Fidelity Investments Limited, a member of the Fidelity marketing group. ID5F

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## pensions



Knees up: An enjoyable retirement requires sober planning

## Breaking cover: The hidden details of pensions are flushed into the open

By James Hipwell

As the Government continues to stress the importance of making private pension provision, what are Britain's 100 pension companies doing to make it easier for us to choose between them? How do you choose between Allied Dunbar and NatWest Life? How can you know that the company with which you have entrusted your retirement income will do a good job of managing your fund?

Sadly, there is no real guarantee of finding the best plan. But by looking closely at the performance of funds, and taking into account charges levied by the pension provider, you'll be able to make a reasonably informed decision.

Comparing performance is useful, although good past performance will not necessarily mean that performance will remain as good in the future.

It is often unwise to pick the top-performing funds as investment trends tend to be cyclical. Remember, today's league-leading fund could be tomorrow's relegation battler.

Consulting actuaries, Bacon & Woodrow, predict that intense competition among pension providers will force many mediocre companies out of business, or into mergers, leaving a handful of dominant firms. The costs of merging could eat into

the value of your fund.

Performance alone should not be the only factor in your decision-making process. It's just as important to look closely at charges, which are likely to reduce the value of your pension fund by about a fifth, but a recent survey suggested that the highest charges will reduce the value of your pension fund by as much as a third. Think what you could save by finding a cheap provider!

Before you decide to buy a pension policy, you must see a key features document which should set out clearly and simply the charges you have to pay to a pension provider. These have been part of pension companies' service offerings since January 1995, when the new disclosure regulations came into effect. All fees must be included, both the initial set-up charges and any monthly or annual management fees. It should also detail how much commission is being paid to the adviser who recommended a particular plan.

The first part of the key features document takes the contributions you will have made and shows the size of the pension fund you will have built up according to three rates of growth - six, nine and 12 per cent.

All insurance companies

use the same growth rates for their illustrations. The figures will differ between pension providers because they take account of all the charges and these vary widely from company to company.

The document will also show the amount your financial adviser will receive from the pension provider for selling its plan to you. Different commissions are paid by different companies and will depend on the size of your monthly premium and the length of the policy.

If you think the commission is too high, take it up with your adviser. Some may be prepared to rebate some of their commission and most fee-based advisers will rebate all the commission back into the fund.

The transfer value is the amount of cash you would receive if you were to move your fund to another pension scheme before you retire. Most of the charges levied are incurred in the early years, so transfer values in the first few years will be extremely low as commissions and monthly charges will take a huge chunk out of what is left. In the first year, for example, your financial adviser's commission alone might wipe out the value of your contributions.

A column headed "Total Actual Reductions To Date" will show how much

of your fund is disappearing each year through charges. After the first couple of years the amount of actual deductions will stop growing so rapidly, as the set-up costs of your pension will have been absorbed. After that has happened, the costs will only increase as monthly and annual charges are added.

There will then be another column headed "Effect Of Deductions To Date" which shows how much the money taken in charges would have grown to if it had been left in the fund. In effect, that's the real cost to you because the cash would have otherwise grown in line with the rest of your investment.

The reduction in yield figure is crucial since it puts charges into perspective by showing how much is shaved off fund performance every year. A small increase in this figure can have a big effect on the size of the final pension fund.

The key features document provides some means of making a comparison between different pension companies. But the document should be backed up by clear information from your financial adviser and the pension provider.

Don't be afraid to ask questions at all stages of the pension-buying process - it could save you making a costly mistake.

## Nasty, brutish and short

Hedge funds are well respected in the US but still regarded in Britain with suspicion. Liam Robb looks at these lucrative bogeymen

In the UK, the only hedge fund manager most retail investors will have heard of is George Soros, manager of the long-established \$10bn Quantum fund. He it was who, through a series of currency trades, single-handedly broke the pound in September 1992, in effect forcing it out of the European exchange rate mechanism. The strategy reputedly made the fund \$1bn.

Yet despite the fact that, worldwide, the industry is worth \$80bn and that, according to *Fortune* magazine, six of America's 10 richest men are hedge fund managers, many UK investors remain suspicious. In the US such managers are viewed as respected members of the investment community, but in the UK an image persists of shady, derivative-trading cowboys operating outside the system. The truth, in fact, could not be more different.

Much of the mystery surrounding hedge funds is down to the fact that, by law, they are not permitted to advertise. Unlike most unit or investment trusts which are classified as collective investment schemes under the Financial Services Act, hedge funds are not regulated. As a result, investors enjoy much less protection.

While regulated funds have very strict rules imposed on them (in, for example, the amount of derivatives they can use), hedge fund managers can make up their own rules. And the fact that their hands are not tied gives rise to the single biggest difference between hedge funds and other pooled investment vehicles: hedge funds can, in the parlance, sell "short". In simple terms, managers can sell shares which the fund does not own.

A large and sophisticated securities lending industry exists for managers who wish to sell short, providing a marketplace in which they can borrow shares in bulk which they believe are going to

perform badly. They then sell these shares on at the market price - a price which they believe is overvalued - and buy them back once their price has dropped. If the strategy works, they will have sold them for rather more than they end up buying them back at. It can be a difficult concept to grasp, but is simply the reverse of the old stock market adage, "Buy cheap, sell dear". Either way, the result is the same: a net gain.

The main advantage of being able to sell short is that it allows funds to make money in a falling market. In addition, if the manager can buy (or go "long") stocks which do well while simultaneously shorting stocks which perform badly, the returns can be astronomical. In good years some hedge funds have returned more 100 per cent, and many funds in the US returned 70 per cent last year - massively outperforming the US equities market as a whole.

Of course nothing in life is that easy and selling short is not an automatic route to riches. In a sustained bull market, for example, where all share prices are rising, short sellers can get their fingers badly burnt. However, managed sensibly, the portfolio should, in theory, be able to control risk more efficiently than a fund in which shorting is not permitted.

Giuseppe Ciardi, fund manager at the London-based Park Place Capital, which runs two offshore funds, explained the appeal: "It is the flexibility of hedge funds which makes them so attractive to investors," he said.

"Because of the ability to sell short volatility can be kept relatively low and, managed responsibly, hedge funds can be less risky than just buying an index like the FT-SE, which can suffer quite violent turns of fortune."

He went on to say that the traditionally risk-averse US pensions industry is beginning to farm out

money to hedge fund managers in an attempt to outperform their benchmarks.

Crispin Odey is founder of Odey Asset Management and one of the rising stars of the UK hedge fund community. He puts his company's success down to the fact that most hedge fund managers are highly qualified market players. "Entering the equity market is like going into a casino," he explained. "Would you advise an inexperienced punter to go into a casino? The answer is no - unless, of course, you know the system. What we have done is worked out ways of beating the system."

Different hedge funds exist to attract investors with differing attitudes to risk. Although most invest in equities, some funds play the currency or bond markets while others dabble in commodities. Some will make heavy use of derivatives while others will be highly geared (in effect, they borrow money which allows them to run up much larger positions than the fund actually owns). There are also funds of funds which invest in a broad range of hedge funds in an attempt to diversify away the risk.

In the US, directories are published which list all the available funds (there are about 1,200 worldwide). For UK investors, however, determining which funds exist and who runs them can be a time-consuming business. Their prices are listed in the "Other Offshore Funds" section of the *Financial Times* but no telephone numbers or addresses are given and this is quite deliberate. Not only are hedge funds not permitted to advertise in the UK, but members of the public are forbidden from approaching them directly and must go through a broker. As a result, most investors tend to be seasoned market professionals.

In the UK you will still be asked to put up a minimum stake of around £100,000.

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**Package Units**

Package Units are being offered by the Company at the cost of 100p each during the launch period. The Package Unit will consist of one Zero Dividend Preference Share, one Income Share and one Capital Share – see the Mini Prospectus for an explanation of these terms. Investment in the Package Unit will equate to investing in an ordinary share in an investment trust without a split capital structure.

Package Units are designed to provide both capital growth and growing income over the life of the Company. At the launch, the estimated annualised gross distribution yield at net of charges of 100p is 4.4%.

**What are the charges?**

No initial charge for 1000 or less units. No additional PEP charge  
For investments in Package Units of M&G Equity Investment Trust P.L.C. there are no extra charges for the M&G PEP. There is no initial charge to your PEP investment and there are no fees payable by you as investor.  
The Fund is managed by M&G Investment Management Limited for an annual fee of 1.25% plus VAT.

How can I invest in M&G Equity Investment Trust P.L.C. through The M&G PEP?  
There are three ways to invest. You can invest a lump sum, receive regular monthly payments or make a combination of lump sum and monthly payments. Each contribution will be invested in Package Units of M&G Equity Investment Trust P.L.C. and your unit(s) you own will go in general PEP in any rate for £8,000.  
Provided you invest during the offer period you will have the chance to invest your £8,000 PEP allowances for both the 1995/96 and 1996/97 tax years.  
Arrangements will be made to enable investors who acquire Package Units in M&G Equity Investment Trust P.L.C., during the offer period, to sell and reinvest their units into The M&G PEP at a later date.

There is no share exchange or PEP transfer facility available due to time constraints.

**Lump sum payments only**

The minimum lump sum you can invest is £1,000. The maximum lump sum is £5,000 each tax year.

**Monthly payments (1996/97 tax year only see the next M&G page)**

Your first monthly payment will be collected on Wednesday 1st February 1996. Your future payments will be deducted by direct debit, your first payment will be collected and invested on Wednesday 17th April 1996 at the market price ruling at or about 2.30pm on that date. There will also be a stamp duty cut of 0.5% where applicable. Your payments will continue being collected until the third Wednesday of each month by M&G unless you instruct us, in writing, to stop.

If you decide to invest in this way you will not have to complete further application forms for future tax years but we will automatically continue your PEP contributions across the following tax years. If you wish to stop paying, please let us know by completing form 1996/97 application form.

**Lump sum and monthly payments**

You may invest by a combination of lump sum and monthly payments. If you wish to do this, please send a cheque for your lump sum payment and you should complete the Direct Debit instruction for future monthly payments on the 1996/97 application form. When will my first payment be made?

**For the 1996/97 tax year**

Any cheques and banknotes of cheques and banknotes that will be cashed on the 29th February 1996, and Package Units will be reintroduced into The M&G PEP on 8th April 1996.

**Regular monthly payments** The first payment will be collected and invested on 17th April 1996 at the market price ruling at or about 2.30pm on that date.  
Can I cancel my investment once the offer period closes on 29th February 1996? Yes, you can top up your PEP by cheque which must be received by us by the third Wednesday of the month, provided that the total amount contributed in a tax year does not exceed £8,000. If you wish to increase your monthly payments you can also notify us in writing at any time. If we receive your cash subscription earlier than the third Wednesday of the month, we shall hold the money in a client account outside your PEP until that time.

How do I arrange to receive tax free interest?

If you are a UK resident, you can get a PEP. Then tick the box in section 2 of the

must have at least £500 Invested. Tax free PEP dividends for M&G Equity Investment Trust P.L.C. will be paid quarterly. You can choose to receive income payments from your PEP at any time, simply let us know and details will be sent to you.

**Can I reinvest the income from my PEP?**

Yes, you can. Your PEP will be automatically reinvested unless you tell us otherwise. To indicate your wish to receive income you tick the box on the application form. This will ensure that you receive income from your PEP. This could substantially enhance the value of your investment. If, later on, you decide you would like to receive income, simply write to us and we will reinvest the income for you.

**Can I take money out of my PEP at any time?**

Yes. You can sell all or part of the Package Units held in your PEP at any time by sending written instructions to us. There is no withdrawal fee. If you direct us to sell we will send you the proceeds on the last settlement date true of 31st March each year. If we receive your request before 12.30pm the Package Units will be sold in the market at or about 2.30pm that business day at the market price. Instructions received after 12.30pm will be treated as having been received on the following business day.

For further details on how to withdraw funds and to cancel – Arrive Instruction Contributions and redemption requirements state that in a tax year in which you have made contributions to a PEP if you withdraw all the assets held in your PEP, you cannot make any further contributions to a PEP in that financial year unless you do so before the first day of January following the year in which you withdrew the funds.

**How do I apply?**

**1. Complete the PEP application form(s) for the appropriate tax year(s).**  
You can clearly apply for your PEP with an invest, offer by lump sum, monthly payments or a combination of the two. Please refer to the notes above the application form to help you.

**2. Make your payment.**  
**Lump sum contributions:** Make your cheque or banker's draft payable to "Royal Bank of Scotland plc, M&G PEP, 100 Victoria Road, Glasgow G2 7JL" and enclose it with your form. Please send a separate cheque for each application you complete.  
**Monthly payments (1996/97 tax year only):** Please complete the Direct Debit instruction.

**3. Retain your form for the M&G Offer.** The Royal Bank of Scotland plc, c/o P.O. Box 1000, Glasgow G2 7JL, will contact you between 2.00pm on 29th February 1996. Applications received after this date will be refused.

**What documents will I receive and when?**  
Upon your application has been received in Britain at The Royal Bank of Scotland plc we will send you a confirmation statement 6 working days later. You will also receive confirmation of the details of your PEP in our formal acknowledgment. If you invest in the 1996/97 M&G PEP you will receive this in April.

You will receive half-yearly statements of your PEP progress on 30th June and 31st December each year. You should receive within 25 working days of the end of each period. You will also receive an Annual and Half-Yearly Report and Accounts of M&G Equity Investment Trust P.L.C. when they are published. Prices of Package Units will be quoted in The Financial Times.

**Important notes – Please read carefully**

This advertisement is not intended to encourage anyone to purchase for the purpose of giving information. The information contained in the advertisement is based on our understanding of current law and Internal Revenue practice as at 18th January 1996. Whilst we believe our interpretation of current law and practice to be correct, we cannot be held responsible for the effects of any changes in legislation or any change in interpretation of existing law.

Although you are always the beneficial owner of your Package Units, they will be registered in the name of M&G Financial Services Limited, the registered Plan PEP Manager.

Your rights as a Participant will be governed solely by The M&G Personal Equity Plan Rules and Conditions set out in the advertisement. Please keep them in a safe place.

M&G PEP holders are encouraged to give consideration to the effect of their investment on their holdings to attract Personal Planner your Plan must be transferred to its ordinary.

**Cautious notes**

You should always remember that the values of investments and the income from them may go down as well as up and that you may not get back the amount you invested. The value to you of the tax benefits of a PEP will depend on your own circumstances.

The tax regime of PEPs could change in the future.

Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance.

M&G does not offer investment advice or make any recommendations regarding investments. We only market the packaged products and services of the M&G Group.

If you have any questions you can call us on helpline on 0990 000 620.

If you have already taken out a 1995/96 general PEP with a Plan Manager other than M&G, you can only invest in The M&G PEP in this offer if you complete an application for a new PEP with M&G before 15th March 1997.

**Note 1.** Please give your daytime telephone number so that if a query arises in relation to your application form we can attempt to contact you at once and speed up the processing of your form. No salesman will call. As part of our customer service, we will contact a random sample of investors in the evening to ensure that they are happy with our standards of administration. If you are happy to take part in this research, please also give your evening telephone number. Where this business has been introduced via an intermediary, M&G will contact this intermediary in respect of any queries.

**Note 2.** Your NI40 can be obtained from your employer or your local tax office.

**Note 3.** This application and redemption MUST be made to M&G Financial Package Units with a maximum of 6000 package Units. i.e. 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, 5000 Note 3. This application and redemption MUST be made to M&G Financial Package Units with a maximum of 6000 package Units in the Listing Periods set out in the Listing Particulars dated 17th January 1996. If you subscribe for more than 6000 package Units in excess of the Terms and Conditions of Application set out in the Listing Particulars dated 17th January 1996, you will be allocated to the M&G PEP and you will receive a certificate for them.

**Note 4.** Where shares are acquired in the market there will also be a stamp duty cost of 0.5% when applicable for regular investment made outside of the offer period.

**Note 5.** The Terms and Conditions of application set out in the Listing particulars dated 18th January, 1996 are varied and supplemented as follows:-

(a) You authorise The Royal Bank of Scotland plc M&G Financial Services Limited to take all steps and execute all such documents on your behalf as may be necessary to enable you to exercise your rights as a member of your Package Units.

(b) You authorise The Royal Bank of Scotland plc to send a document of title for the number of Package Units allotted to you to M&G Financial Services Limited and procure that M&G Financial Services Limited is placed on the register of members of the Company in respect of such package units with effect from 5th April, 1996. In addition, please note:-

The application for Package Units contained in this form cannot be withdrawn. An application using this form to open a PEP may be withdrawn by returning the withdrawal slip you will receive with your acknowledgement letter to the Plan Manager at any time prior to 11th March 1996.


(c) Completed applications (and cheques) or banker's drafts must be received by 3.00pm on Thursday 29th February at The Royal Bank of Scotland plc, P.O. Box 793, BRISTOL, BS99 5BR.

If you apply to open a PEP for 1995/96 and to subscribe to it in 1996/97 then the latter application is conditional on the 1995/96 application not being withdrawn. If the 1995/96 application is withdrawn you will receive a direct certificated holding in the Company for the total of your subscriptions.

<b>I Personal Details</b>  Title: Mr/Ms/Miss/Mr/Other:  Full Forenames:  Surname:  Address:    Postcode:   Telephone No. (Inc. STD code):  Daytime:  Evening (optional):	<b>IMPORTANT: DETAILS REQUIRED BY THE INLAND REVENUE</b> Your application cannot be accepted without the following information.  Date of Birth: <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; text-align: center; width: 150px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px;">to</td> <td style="width: 20px;">to</td> <td style="width: 20px;">to</td> <td style="width: 20px;">to</td> <td style="width: 20px;">to</td> <td style="width: 20px;">to</td> <td style="width: 20px;">to</td> <td style="width: 20px;">to</td> <td style="width: 20px;">to</td> <td style="width: 20px;">to</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table> National Insurance No. (NIC) <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; text-align: center; width: 150px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table> Tax Year      I wish to invest in the tax year ending 5th April <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; text-align: center; width: 100px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px;">1</td> <td style="width: 20px;">9</td> <td style="width: 20px;">9</td> <td style="width: 20px;">7</td> </tr> </table> <p><small>(See note 2 above if you cannot locate your NIC)</small></p> <p><small>(See the note below if you are investing by monthly payments)</small></p> <p><small>Note: If you intend to invest monthly by Direct Debit you will still have to complete a new application form for future tax years as your payments will automatically continue for each subsequent year. Please tick this box <input type="checkbox"/> if you only wish to continue for each subsequent year. Please tick this box <input type="checkbox"/> if you only wish to continue for the tax year ending 1997 as stated on the Direct Debit instruction below and do not wish your payments to continue. You may stop your payments at any time upon your written confirmation.</small></p>	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to	to																					1	9	9	7
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**4** ONLY complete this section if you wish to invest regularly. This payments will be made directly from your BareBuddling society account (see case 3 above).

**Direct Debit Instruction** 

**REGULAR PAYMENT WILL NOT BE COLLECTED UNTIL 17TH APRIL 1998 AND WILL BE INVESTED IN THE 1998-99 TAX YEAR**

Name of account holder: \_\_\_\_\_ Account number: \_\_\_\_\_ Sort code: \_\_\_\_\_

Originator's Identification number 954291: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name and address of your BareBuddling society: \_\_\_\_\_

To the Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

**Originator's reference** \_\_\_\_\_ **Limit Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**MAG FEP:**

I understand you are paying Direct Debit from my account at the request of MAG Financial Services Limited. The payments are variable and may be debited on various dates. I understand that MAG Financial Services Limited may change the amounts and dates only after giving me prior notice.

I will inform the BareBuddling society in writing if I wish to cancel this understanding that if any Direct Debit is paid which breaks the terms or the instruction, the BareBuddling society will make a request.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bank and Building Society may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of accounts.**

2001 FEBRUARY



## trusts unit and investment

## Put your trust in Peps

Many investors are missing out on the tax advantages of the personal equity plan. By Paul Slade

**T**housands of savers could be wasting tax by failing to shelter their unit trust savings within a tax-free Personal Equity Plan, according to industry figures out this week. A new survey from the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds shows that the average unit trust investor's portfolio is worth only £4,649, well within the limit which allows investors to invest up to £6,000 a year in a PEP.

But while 28 per cent had both bought a unit trust PEP and bought unit trusts directly, presumably because they had already reached their £6,000 PEP limit, a further 13 per cent of recent unit trust buyers bought their trusts direct, rather than doing so through a PEP, which suggests that many people are still needlessly paying income and capital gains tax on their savings.

PEPs have been around since 1987 but investors have been buying unit trusts and investments for a lot longer, and many may not be aware of the current rules. Your main PEP can hold up to £6,000, which you can top up with a single-company PEP to the maximum of £3,000. Single-company PEPs, as the name suggests, can hold shares in only one company, and are often used as part of an employee share ownership scheme.

The PEP itself is not an investment plan, but puts your money in unit trusts or investment trusts, giving you access to a wide range of companies' shares. Some PEPs will put your money into just one of the fund manager's unit trusts, such as a broadly based UK equities fund, while others spread your money across a handful of different funds. If your investment does well, the shares' growing value gives you capital growth, while the dividends which the shares pay out can be taken as income.

Some PEPs put your money not into unit trusts, but into investment trusts. Both these products allow you to spread your investment across a wide range of companies and markets around the world, but they do have some different characteristics.

One key difference is that investment trusts are allowed to borrow money to boost their investments, while unit trusts are not. This process,

known as gearing, should allow an investment trust to outperform a comparable unit trust when the stock market is rising. But gearing exaggerates not only your profits but also your losses, which can make investment trusts more volatile.

Tax is not the only advantage of buying trusts in PEP form. New entrants to the PEPs market, such as Richard Branson's Virgin Group, have also driven charges down, which means you can often pay just 3 per cent initial charge on unit trusts bought through a PEP, but 5 per cent on the same trusts from the same management group if you buy your units direct.

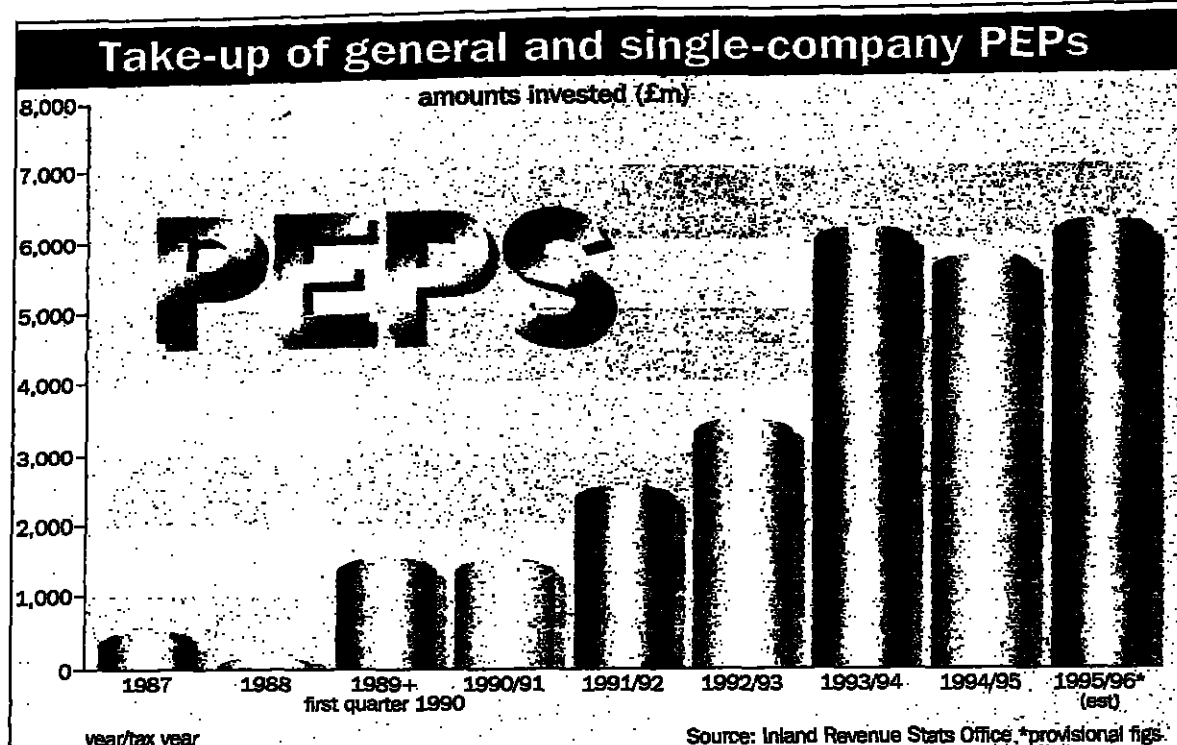
PEPs are also exempt from capital gains tax. Many savers will find the PEP's capital gains tax exemption irrelevant in the plan's early years, as you pay CGT only when your annual profits from investments reach £6,000. But this relief does become worthwhile later. The only other significant downside of PEPs is that they may weight your portfolio unduly towards UK and European stocks.

There are two types of unit trust or investment trust you can include in your PEP, known as qualifying and non-qualifying trusts. Qualifying trusts, which must account for at least £4,500 of your £6,000 main PEP, are those with half or more of their assets in the UK or other European Union countries. Non-qualifying trusts, which are free to invest elsewhere, can account for only £1,500 of your £6,000 plan.

So, if you are convinced that returns from outside the EU are likely to significantly outstrip those in Europe, you might be prepared to forgo your tax break in order to invest as fully as possible in those markets. Higher returns, however, and this strategy will not be suitable for all investors.

The fact that you can buy a new PEP every year, and that both husband and wife can invest up to £9,000 a year each, means that couples with PEP portfolios of £100,000 or more are not uncommon.

Few fund managers would recommend having a portfolio of that size quite so heavily weighted towards the UK market as most PEPs are, particularly as we approach



a general election and probable change of government.

Barry Bateman, president of Fidelity Investments Europe, says the vast majority of the group's PEP clients have almost all their money in the UK, and that the £1,500 non-qualifying allowance is largely ignored.

He says: "It's not that we're not optimistic about the UK, but generally diversification is a sensible investment approach. People's PEP portfolios may well represent the vast majority of their equity investments, and if it's all skewed towards the UK, that doesn't seem to be particularly prudent. If you've got a £100,000 portfolio, then in an ideal world you'd have £25,000 of that overseas."

Fidelity is hoping to tackle this problem with the launch of its new triple-performance PEP. This plan will put 50 per cent of investors' money into the company's UK special situations trust, 25 per cent into its European trust, 25 per cent into its South-east Asia trust. All these three funds have grown at twice the rate of

their respective stock market indices since launch.

The Autif survey also suggests that equity investments through unit trusts are no longer only for the rich. Before PEPs made their debut in 1987, the average unit trust holding was about £12,000 to £15,000, three times today's level. The survey also shows that 70 per cent of unit trust investors are either basic- or lower-rate taxpayers, earning less than £24,300 a year.

Despite the stock market's record performance in 1995, unit trust PEP sales fell from 1994's total of £3.9bn to just £3.1bn. Autif believes this is because there is a built-in time lag between people observing strong stock market performance and actually buying a PEP or some other equity product. Sales in the final quarter of 1995, up to £802m from £698m the previous quarter, would seem to support this view. PEPs accounted for 77 per cent of all retail unit trust sales in December 1995.

Part of the recovery is due to the growing awareness of the recovery in the stock market. But inflows have

been boosted by the emergence of two new products, index tracker funds and corporate bond PEPs. Index tracker PEPs, unlike actively managed funds, do not rely on the fund manager's skill at stock-picking. Instead, the fund buys either a stake in every company represented by a particular stock market index, such as the FT-SE, or just enough stocks to mirror accurately the index's performance.

Many investors like these funds because they are easy to understand and you can keep track of your investment simply by following the FT-SE. All but about 20 per cent of actively managed funds underperform the index in any case, which means investors in the remaining 80 per cent of actively managed funds would be better off with a tracker.

The corporate bond PEP is for those investors whose priority is immediate high income rather than capital growth. These plans do not buy shares, but the bonds which companies use to borrow money from investors. Savers put £478m into corporate bond PEPs during 1995.

## TEN THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PEPs

1. The cheapest and most tax-efficient way to invest in a unit trust or an investment trust is, in the form of a personal equity plan.
2. Unlike unit trust and investment trust holdings the interest on assets in a PEP is free of income tax, and capital gains are exempt from CGT.
3. PEPs make good substitutes for a pension plan, but can be sold at any time and the gains are still tax-free, unlike a Tessa.
4. Investors can put up to £6,000 in each tax year into a personal equity plan investing in a unit trust, investment trust or selected shares.
5. They can also put up to £3,000 more each year into a single-company PEP investing literally in the shares of one company, often as part of an employee share-ownership scheme.
6. Since last July a PEP can be invested in corporate bonds, fixed interest securities and loan stocks issued by UK and EU companies as well as UK government securities to produce a high-income investment.
7. Three quarters of each PEP must be invested in trusts with at least half their assets in the UK or other EU countries. The balance can be invested elsewhere, in the US or Japan.
8. Personal equity plans are mostly run by investment managers or stockbrokers but it is possible to have a self-select PEP and choose the assets yourself.
9. PEP managers can charge an initial fee to set up the PEP, an annual management charge and a withdrawal charge, but as a result of competition charges are falling and PEPs are often cheaper than ordinary unit trusts.
10. You can invest in a PEP with a lump sum or a regular savings contribution.

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\*Source: Macropol. Figures to 1/1/95. Launched 1/5/85. UK Growth and Income Stocks. One-sided, gross income reinvested. 5 year performance +100.16%. Please note that the value of unit trusts and their value will depend on your individual circumstances. The value of unit trusts and their value from then can go down as well as up and investors may not get back the full amount invested. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. Newton Fund Managers Limited is regulated by the Financial Services Authority and is a member of the FSA.

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Over the last five years the index has risen by 13% - that's a 35% higher return than the average unit trust. In fact most actively managed funds fail to match the FTSE-A All-Share Index with any consistency.

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To invest - or to transfer funds from an existing PEP - ring us now on 0800 11 66 22 (your call is free). Or return the coupon today for more information.

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**AND A FREE PEP FOR A YEAR**

\*Source: Macropol. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. All statements are correct as at 22.01.95. Full written details are available on request. Legal & General (Unit Trust Managers) Limited. Registered in England No. 009418. Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queens Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TP. Regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

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# Mug's game or money for old rope?

From the National Lottery to buying shares, different forms of gambling play a major part in many people's lives. What are the chances of coming out ahead? By David Porter

Everyone likes a flutter. But generally gambling is a mug's game and not for the investor. You pay your money, takes your choice... and lose more often than you win. Why else would gambling businesses exist unless the odds are loaded against the punter? Take roulette. A standard wheel has 37 numbers, including the zero. But the highest prize possible – by successfully placing your bet on a single number – amounts to only 35 times the amount staked. Of course, it is always possible to win, otherwise punters wouldn't find gambling such a draw. Capital Corporation, owner and operator of Crocford's, a London casino, knows that to its cost. Last Monday it had to hoist a profits warning because high-rollers knocked it for six in December.

In certain circumstances the odds look more attractive, making gambling of interest to the investor. A prime example is the National Lottery. Coming up with the six jackpot numbers is a 14-million-to-one chance (or, to be pedantic, 13,983,816-to-one). Jackpot winnings on a double rollover week are estimated at £40m, so buying 14 million £1 tickets does not look like a bad investment. Obviously there are flaws to this strategy. Filling in 14 million lottery cards is one. That would take more time than standing in the longest lottery queue in history.

Another drawback is that the rules ban commercial syndicates from taking part. The other obvious snag is that the jackpot may be shared. Last weekend's £40.2m double rollover jackpot went to four winners. So shelling out £14m for lottery tickets would have yielded just over £10m as part of the jackpot prize. In addition, there would be the numerous smaller prizes that one giant stakeholder would get. Last weekend 60 winners gained £83,960 apiece for coming up with five of the six main numbers and the bonus number. Of the smaller prizes 1,713 won £1,838 apiece; 79,694 won £86 and 1,628,683 won £10 each. Participants have a one-in-54 chance of

winning a prize overall, with half of the Lottery's weekly takings going back in prizes.

Noughts and Crosses, a scratchcard game from Camelot, gives punters a one-in-five chance of winning a prize. The prizes are a lot smaller, however, with the maximum at £50,000.

Premium bonds provide another avenue for the investor who is a gambler at heart. The National Savings Department has just changed its approach. From May there will be more larger winners but fewer prizes overall. The monthly jackpot is £1m but the chances of winning that with a single £1 bond are pretty slim at 1.6 billion to one. Punters do not lose their stakes, however, and so in order to get a fairer idea of a premium bond's worth it must be measured against the interest that would be gained if the money was put elsewhere.

The football pools remain an old favourite too, despite the success of the National Lottery. Jackpot prizes are now around £1.5m, well below the largest payout of £2.8m. Even so, five million coupons are sent in weekly and around 200,000 prizes are paid out every month. Some 27 per cent of the take goes into the prizes.

The aim of the game is to get eight score draws out of 58 football fixtures on the coupon. The chance of selecting the eight score draws is some 191 million to one. But punters increase their chances by choosing 10 or 12 fixture combinations, giving them 165 and 495 more chances respectively. Choosing 12 fixtures costs £6.60, improving a punter's chance of the jackpot to under 400,000 to one.

Straightforward betting on horses and dogs has provided the main outlet for gamblers for decades. Like all forms of gambling the odds are stacked against the punter and are designed so the bookie doesn't lose. Around 80 per cent of the take comes back in winnings.

While some professional gamblers have a happy knack of coming out



Would you invest your money with a bookie? As in all types of gambling, the odds in horse and dog racing are stacked against the punter

Photograph: Allsport

ahead, the average punter is likely to show losses over a prolonged period of time.

Slot machines can provide amusement, although prizes are too small to make a difference. In public places the jackpot is limited to £4 cash on a maximum 25p stake. Gaming machines in private clubs are allowed to pay out a £250 cash jackpot. Some 80 to 90 per cent of takings are paid back as prizes.

Taking a punt on performance of financial, commodity or currency markets through futures or options, while

some see this as nothing short of gambling, can also have a legitimate investment and tax-planning use. Most popular among private investors are share options. These can be arranged through a stockbroker making use of the London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange (Liffe). Options over shares can be bought or sold in more than 70 of Britain's largest companies.

For instance, buying shares in the electronics giant GEC currently costs around 360p a share. Buying a call

option (the right to buy GEC shares at 360p on Wednesday 3 May) would cost 22p a share. If GEC's shares rise to, say, 400p then profit per share will amount to 18p – the difference between 400p less 360p less 22p. That amounts to an 81 per cent profit on the original outlay. But if GEC shares take a dive the investor would lose all the 22p per share paid for the option.

The IG Index is distinct from share options because gains are tax-free. IG's most popular service is guessing where the FT-SE 100 index will be in

future. A customer may ask for the "price" of the FT-SE 100 in March and be given the range 3,720-3,730. The customer can either "buy" at 3,730 if he thinks the index will soar or "sell" at 3,720 if he thinks it will fall. The punter will decide on the level of risk – anything from £10 per FT-SE point either way. So if on judgement day (Friday 3 March) the FT-SE had soared to 3,740-3,750 then "buyers" would be able to cash in their gain at 3,740, making a tidy £100 profit. IG Index 01771-896 0022.

## Are you too busy earning money to make money?

If you're working hard for your money, you may not have the time – or the expertise – to ensure that you're making the most of the amounts you can afford to save or invest.

As a result, it's easy to miss out. You may be missing opportunities to save tax. You may have money in accounts which offer uncompetitive growth rates. Or equally, you may be putting your money at unnecessary and inappropriate risk.

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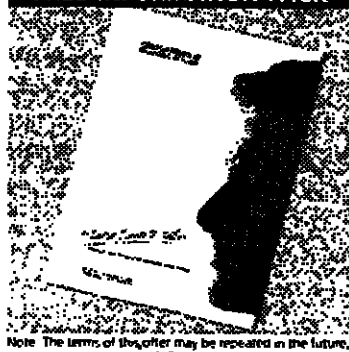
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Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

Independent Financial Adviser (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

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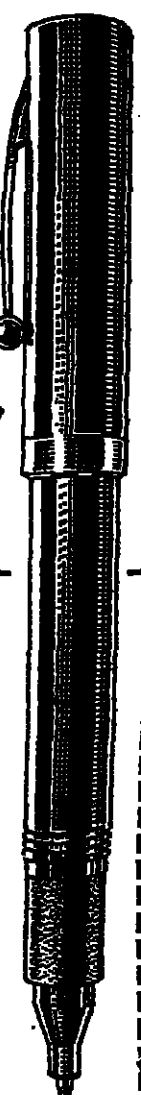
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# AUSTRALASIA: START HERE

Choosing a destination purely in terms of pence-per-mile may sound a silly idea: but fares to Australasia have fallen so low that it is cheaper to get to Sydney than Shetland. As these pages demonstrate, Australia and New Zealand have more to offer than Opera Houses, bungees and soap operas.

Even if you have no great interest in visiting Australasia, then simple

arithmetic still steers you towards the Southern Hemisphere. Want to go to Tokyo this month? It will cost you £240 less if you are prepared to visit Brisbane as well. The stopover possibilities are better than ever, with the British Airways/Qantas global explorer fares giving you an extensive choice of routes.

For the lowest prices to Australia before Easter, call Austravel (0171-

734 7755) and Airtours (01706 260000) for late-availability fares on their charters. Airtours has a fare of £529 from Gatwick to Sydney on 7 February, dropping to £499 on 21 February. Austravel has a wider range of departures and destinations; some are priced as low as £349 return, but most are around £499.

The annual April-to-June fares war to Australasia is generating a

real buyer's market. This year, the airlines which fly direct to Australia and New Zealand are offering fares which compete with the usual cheapies such as Olympic of Greece and the Japanese carriers. Air New Zealand (0181-741 2299) is offering two return flights from Heathrow to Auckland for a total of £1,369, which works out at just £684.50 per person (including tax). This deal is

available 16 April-15 June, and must be booked by 15 February. A stopover is allowed in Los Angeles in each direction, but costs an extra £12 each in tax. A better deal still is available from agents such as Quest Worldwide (0181-547 3322): for £640 including tax, you can travel London-Los Angeles-Sydney-Auckland and back.

The British Airways-Qantas tie-up

means a much wider range of flights can be used for the latest World Offer fare of £619 (including tax) to Perth or Darwin. These April-to-June fares are being sold direct by BA (0345 222111) and through travel agents. A stopover is allowed in each direction in either Singapore or Bangkok. The same fare applies for an open-jaw ticket (out to Perth and back from Darwin, or vice-versa).

## The longest mail run in the world

Homes in the Outback are up to 150 miles apart. Jeremy Hart joined the local postman on his rounds



Peter Fleming's twin-engined Piper Chieftain: 'Without the paying passengers the service would barely make any money'

Photograph: Jeremy Hart

Somewhere where it rarely rains, Peter Fleming is covering the longest mail run on earth. It's sixteen hundred miles from end to end, across the Australian Outback, and serves the population of a fifth of the area of Australia.

The Crocodile Dundees of this world are no longer cut off for months on end: by plane, once a week, Mr Fleming brings them electricity bills, telephone bills, postcards from ageing aunts in Torquay. The post lands with a thud - not on their doormats, but on the dirt runways of cattle stations in the bush.

I joined the mail run at its starting point, the aerodrome at Port Augusta. A dozen mail bags sat in a pile under the wing of a twin-engined Piper Chieftain of Augusta Airways, and loitering on the velour sofas in the one-room departure lounge were three postal-package holiday-makers.

Not philatelists or other members of the Tooting Unpopular Postal Workers Front, but Simon, a Swiss cabinet maker from Gstaad, Bob, a former train driver from Newcastle, a coal town north of Sydney, and Bob's wife, Val. For two days we would be bonded together at anything from 50 to 5,000ft in a metal tube the size of an elongated Mini.

On a wing and with a prayer we lifted off from Port Augusta and flew over the rucked brown ridges of the Flinders Ranges to Leigh Creek, a mining town on the edge of the Strzelecki Desert and the jumping off point for the Outback. Val offered us rock cakes. They seemed apt fodder in a landscape where vegetation is never taken for granted.

The mail plane from Port Augusta up to Boulia in north west Queensland and back is chartered by the state governments and Australia Post. "Without the paying passengers, the service would barely make any money," said Mr Fleming. He had forgotten his GPS satellite compass and was flying us across the bush from memory.

To us it all looked the same, a land of dozens of different tones of red, interspersed with pans of dried-up salt lakes and occasional smatterings of vegetation. Usually, four and a half inches of rain falls in this part of Australia each year, but last year they only had one and a half inches.

Ironically, it is only rain that stops the mail getting through to the 20 stations on Mr Fleming's round. "If the strips get waterlogged, we divert to the nearest alternative and leave the mail there," he said. "When it rains, everything stops."

For the tourists, the first halt is not a good one. Mike Sheehan, the notoriously stumpy owner of Moolawatana station, has decided he doesn't want the camera-toting passengers on the mail plane to take photos.

We were on the ground for a minute. The propellers kept turning. Peter rummaged in the tail for the Moolawatana bag and handed

it over. Mr Sheehan grunted a thank you. "Most of the station owners don't have a lot to say. They lead a pretty solitary life and are people of few words," said Mr Fleming.

Merty Merty was the next address, 150 miles away. The boundary between the two stations includes the Dog Fence, a massive barrier across the country that keeps the predatory wild dingos out of the sheep stations to the south.

There was no one there when we arrived, so Peter threw their sack into the old oil drum that is now used as their mail box. Others use old fridges and milk churns.

"Some people feel cut off if their mail doesn't arrive each week. Others couldn't care," Mr Fleming said as we made for Nappa Merrie. Basil Kakasiouris, an engineer on the station, was eager to receive a spare part for a solar generating unit used at the north end of their two-million-acre property.

Eight-year-old Rachel Stafford, was waiting for some books to arrive from her correspondence teacher in Port Augusta. Her father John, the new manager at Nappa Merrie, had just moved the family from another station in Queensland. "With School of the Air, it doesn't matter where you are," he said. "The kids are all in the same class."

Nappa Merrie was the first halt where we could get off the Piper. On the Port Augusta mail run, the only concessions to the tourist baggage are a few refreshment stops.

The Outback survives on beer - Australia's amber nectar or golden throat charmer - and nowhere sells more tinnies than the Birdsville Hotel. The squat stone building is a legend in its own opening hours. The previous weekend, 70,000 cans of beer had passed over the scoured wooden bar.

There's another stop in store - and another drinking opportunity. The mail round is split by an overnight halt in Boulia, a one-street desert town where the only two shops sell outback clothing and high-chairs for babies. When the mail plane is in town, the Australia Hotel is booked out.

The next day, through Durrie and Clifton Downs, we delivered bills and bank balances, mail order catalogues and that day's newspaper. It was an exhausting run, but Mr Fleming is happy with his lot. "At least I've never been bitten by a dog out here," he said.

The trip on Augusta Airways costs £495 (through Quest Worldwide, 0181-547 3322) which includes most meals. Cape York Air Services (00 61 70 359399) also offers mail flights around far north Queensland. The longest trip is the Wednesday run, from Cairns to Heathlands at almost the end of the peninsula, which costs \$275 (about £140). A shorter series of hops around Palmerville is about half as much.

### AUSTRALASIA TRAVEL PACK

#### How to get in

You need a visitor visa for Australia. You can get one from several travel agents that specialise in the destination, but you pay a fee of around £15. Visas issued by the Australian High Commission in London, or the Consulate in Manchester, are free. Call 0891 600333 (premium rate line) for more information. British passport holders require no visa for visits to New Zealand of up to six months.

#### How to get around

Ansett and Qantas, the two leading domestic airlines in Australia, both operate airpass schemes. Providing you take a minimum of two flights, you pay £30 for each sector (with an extra £25 for particularly long flights to the Northern Territory and Western Australia). Air New Zealand and Ansett NZ have similar schemes for New Zealand. A range of bus passes is available on Greyhound Pioneer, culminating in a year of unlimited travel around Australia for \$1,350. Rail passes can be obtained from Long Haul Leisure, PO Box 113, Peterborough PE3 8HY (01733 335599).

#### How to get out

The Australian departure tax of \$25 (about £13) is now included in the price of your air ticket, as is the UK Air Passenger Duty of £10. Other local taxes, such as Sydney's Noise Tax (£2) and the airport levy in Cairns (£3.50), are also included. New Zealand has a departure tax of \$20 (about £8), payable locally.

#### Free information

Australian Tourist Commission, Gemini House, 10-18 Putney Hill, London SW15 (0181-780 2229). "Go Australia" is a free guide booklet with a reasonable ratio of editorial space to advertising. To receive a copy of the newly published second edition, send a large self-addressed envelope with two first-class stamps to: Go Publishing, 64 Chiswick High Road, London W4 1SY (0181-742 2255) or pick a copy up at one of the Independent Traveller's World events in London or Edinburgh; call 0117-930 4440 for event details. New Zealand Tourism Board, 80 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TQ (0171-930 1662). Holiday brochures and information: 0839 300900.

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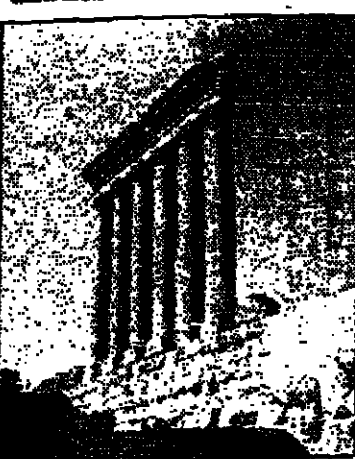
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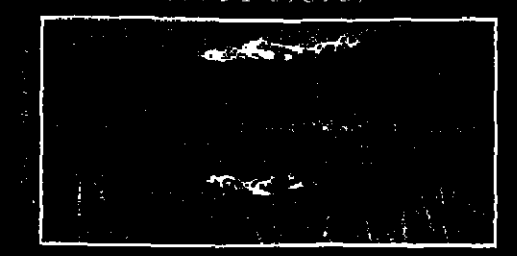
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4/10/2014, 10:00 AM



# Whitby in the winter is as it should be: fragrant with the smell of salt, seaweed and serenity

By Josie Barnard



Whitby Abbey, established in 657 by St Hilda, played host to the Synod of Whitby in 664

At first, the appeal of Whitby out of season is pathos. The shutters are down on the candy-floss and flip-flop stalls. A lone gull flaps past the empty bandstand. Sand-dusted coats the iron cliff lift, which is resolutely in suspension. Everything, it seems, indicates an absence: tourists. Instead of multi-coloured, striped towels and tanning oil-shined bodies, the span of beach is staked with driftwood. A bone-chilling northerly whips an old Summer Specials menu wild through empty streets.

I pull my coat collar tighter and hurry along the bleak stone pier out into the raging January sea, to a point where I can get a perspective.

Seen from beyond the lighthouse at the end of the West Pier, Whitby is a town of red-roofed tiny houses tumbled into two harbour clusters split by the River Esk, guarded by emblems of its past on the skyline. Facing each other from opposite cliffs are Whitby Abbey and the Captain Cook monument.

Put a pink plastic bucket on Cook's bronze head, crown the Abbey with a jet-jewelled hair comb and you have the component parts of Whitby's economic survival through history – tourism, the jet carving industry, sea faring and Christianity. It is a peculiar mix.

Tourism, for the tourists anyway, should be about fun. Jet boomed in the

19th century because Queen Victoria adopted it as the gem of mourning. The 18th-century maritime legacy embraces Cook's discovery of the cause of scurvy. The 7th-century founding of Whitby Abbey by St Hilda represented a bloody victory of Christianity over paganism. Today, tourism both exploits and bestows new life on these events, with a network of museums, statues and plaques.

Alone on the end of the pier, even through careful sweater and thermal layerings, I am chilled by the tones of the Hawker foghorn. Yet it is also strangely comforting: that it is a signal implies it is signalling to someone. I look into the town and spot a woman scurrying across the swing bridge. A teenager dashes from a car to the harbour-side arcade hall. It's as if I've glimpsed the town's ghostly real owners. The appeal of Whitby changes from pathos to voyeuristic curiosity. What do residents do beyond "the season"?

One thing, of course, is prepare for the next season. From spring through summer, John Brennan skips cod fishing trips for touring angling clubs. Come autumn, he cranes his boat, *Achates*, up on to the harbour's floating pontoon for de-barnacled and engine-fixing work. Meanwhile, his wife, Wilma, shuts up her tea-room and shop, Time and Tide, and retires to her garage-workshop, where

## Six of the best sights in Whitby

**St Mary's Parish Church, East Cliff** Dating back to 1110, this is a charming architectural hotch-potch with a maze-like quantity of 18th-century box pews and unique triple-decker pulpit hung with ear-trumpets.

**Sutcliffe Shop and Gallery** Turn-of-the-century Whitby photographs by Frank Meadow Sutcliffe.

**Whitby Abbey** The religious community founded here in 657 by Abbess Hilda produced nine saints and hosted the seminal Synod of Whitby, which decided the system for dating Easter.

she can be spied through the dust-layered window transforming fossilised peat into jet jewellery with high-powered dentist tools.

Jet carving is anti-social – "in its natural state, it stinks like a bog," Wilma explains, so it has to happen before the tourists arrive, as does John's leaflet printing and mailing if he's to maximise his time out with angling parties. But however much preparatory work there is to do, John and Wilma prioritise their passion for 17 and 18 mile-long moorland walks in winter.

"Without the string vest brigade and that overpowering smell of bodies,

**Whitby Museum and Pannett Art Gallery** Even in winter the museum is busy, with schoolchildren scribbling notes about Whitby's jet, maritime, fossil, flora and fauna legacy.

**Museum of Victorian Whitby** Includes the wheelhouse of a 19th-century whaling ship and a unique collection of miniature room settings.

**Whitby Lifeboat Museum** Includes a flimsy-looking RNLi hand-rowed boat that helped the Whitby crew earn more gold medals for gallantry than any other crew in the country.

Whitby is as it should be – more fragrant, thrills Wilma. "You get a real sense of the salt, the tide, the seaweed. I really savour the serenity." And while the love of off-season peace and quiet is shared, "we like to keep ourselves to ourselves," states John curtly.

Ice and heavy moorland snowfall often cut off the road and rail routes that connect Whitby and the outside world. The two piers curving out into the sea look ready to clamp shut and seal in the harbour. A concave wall of cliffs at once protects and imprisons the town. Whitby physically looks in on itself.

Standing exposed on top of East

Cliff, I shiver. The abbey's is a bleak site. Salt wind has scoured the gravestones to blank, as if denying that people, even the dead, have any lasting place here.

Then my eyes are drawn along the horizon, toward the defiantly intact carvings of Caedmon's Cross and down the hillside curve of the 199 stone steps into a clutch of town that seems from this perspective to be defying the laws of gravity. Washing strung on a line in one jutting back garden flaps hold of a nearby chimney pot. On a cold February day, it feels like Whitby is exclusively mine. I understand what locals mean when they speak of "the pull": the sudden desire to come and live here.

I think ahead to Whitby on a sunny July day, crawling with Goths who'll reduce the abbey's status to just another sight on the Dracula Trail leaflet, price 30p. Ancient streets will be erased by caravans, hostellers, day-trippers and their crisp-packet and lolly-paper rubbish.

My illusions could not survive even minutes into the season. However strong – urgent, almost – it is now, I can't imagine I would feel "the pull" in summer.

Josie Barnard's first novel, *'Poker Face'*, is published by Virago on 22 February, price £7.99.

## Captain Cook: from Whitby to Hawaii

In the end, Whitby's global hero took one trip too many. On *Valentine's Day*, 1779, Captain James Cook died on a Hawaiian beach in a fracas over petty theft. But in the previous 20 years, he completed journeys that would be the envy of many a modern traveller.

His first voyage of exploration was to map the St Lawrence River into what is now the Province of Quebec. Cook's reward was the 18th-century equivalent of a South Pacific airpass. On his first voyage to the world's largest ocean, he visited Tahiti, New Zealand and Australia. His landfall in the latter was at exactly the same spot (Botany Bay) as the runway at Sydney airport just out into the bay.

He mapped the east coast of Australia assiduously, casually giving names according to the calendar (the Whitsundays), misfortune (Cape Tribulation) and even compass malfunction (Magnetic Island). At the northern extreme of what is now Queensland he claimed the territory for the Crown and called the whole lot New South Wales.

By now Captain Cook was clocking up the Sea Miles at a furious rate. His subsequent voyage took him below the Antarctic Circle, by way of New Caledonia and the Norfolk Islands. He sailed first to Hawaii, to Alaska and the Bering Strait. He returned to the Big Island of Hawaii and anchored in Kealahou Bay. As a monument at the bay relates, the captain "fell near this spot on the 14th day of February 1779".

He never reached Melbourne, but that did not stop the city fathers trying to capitalise on the Cook connection. In 1934, his Yorkshire cottage was dismantled and moved stone-by-stone to the Fitzroy Gardens in the heart of Melbourne. The former home of the first man to explore both the Arctic and the Antarctic stands in a twee little garden close to the "Tudor Village". Such is tourism.

Simon Calder



## something to declare

### Bargain of the week

Study the sums behind this week's bargain. And you begin to wonder where the catch is. For £99, Air France will take you from Heathrow to Paris, provide a transfer into the centre, put you up for two nights in the three-star Mercure Hotel (breakfast included) and give you a transport pass and museum card.

We calculate that if you tried to put the same trip together yourself, it would cost at least £50 more.

Travel from Birmingham and you have to

pay just £10 more; from Manchester £15; and from Edinburgh, £40. And if you have always wanted to stay at a four-star Meridien hotel, it will cost only £20 extra.

It turns out that there is, indeed, a catch. The number Air France advertises, 0181-742 3443, is so busy that you can never get through. So the airline has briefed staff in its main reservations centre to take bookings on 0181-742 6600. The offer is open for any weekend until the end of March.

### True or False

There are quite a few potential hazards lurking in the waters of the Barrier Reef – *Queensland Travel Survival Kit*

Too true. In February, the Sunshine Coast in southern Queensland is bloody hot. On any given day, you have to contend with ripe, runaway surfboards and possibly sharks and box jellyfish.

When I was there a week ago, the beach I went to was closed due to the earlier sighting of these lethal jellyfish. Yet there were a few die-hard surfers out there. Lifeguards wandered along the shore, warning people not to go in the water. But the temptation to join the surfers was almost too much to bear.

I hadn't been near a decent beach since I last visited my home state two years ago. So what were the options? Could I go in, take a risk and hope that the earlier sighting was merely a lone stinger? Should I remain on the beach in the baking heat, or should I just go home? The last was not an option since I'd flown 12,000 miles for this holiday.

So I waited and watched. After half an hour, when no surfers had come screaming in to shore covered in red weals, I bravely (or is it stupidly?) ventured forth. The water was warm, clean and apparently free of jellyfish. They had probably been eaten by the sharks.

Lisa Clark

### Trouble spots

Warnings from *The World's Most Dangerous Places* by Robert Young Pelton and Coskun Aral (Fielding Worldwide, £11.95).

Most dangerous countries for domestic flights: China, North Korea, Colombia, the nations of Central Africa and former Soviet Union.

The highest crime figure at leading US airports is at JFK, New York, where you have one chance in 4,000 of being a victim.

Most dangerous place to be a pedestrian is Lima, Peru, where on average one person dies under the wheels of a bus every day.

Most dangerous month for US road accidents is August (least dangerous is January).

Most dangerous road in Poland (one of Europe's most dangerous countries for road accidents) is the E-30, with more than 100 deaths per year.

Further advice and information from the Foreign Office travel advice service on 0171-270 4129; on BBC2 Ceefax page 564; and on Internet at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/>

## Snow's up by Chris Gill

# Chalet holidays for grown-ups

My favourite form of ski holiday is what you might call the chalet holiday for grown-ups: catered chalet holidays in properties that offer something like the comfort of a hotel holiday, rather than just the informal simplicity (to adopt a charitable description) that was the main attraction of the chalet holiday 20 years ago.

My November survey of the best chalets in Courchevel, Meribel and Val d'Isère revealed some splendid properties run by a range of companies. But there's no doubt about the outfit that made the greatest impression: although only one or two Ski Company chalets made it into my top six, a top 10 would have included several of their properties.

In mid-January I spent a few days at Chalet Gueret, in the backwater village of Essert-Romand, just outside Morzine. Gueret was among the first Ski Company chalets, and remains a sort of mother ship for the Alpine team. More importantly for the visitor, it is an exceptionally attractive place to stay: spacious, warmly welcoming, comfortable, tastefully fur-

nished – and splendidly atmospheric, with creaky floors that testify to the building's 200 years.

Like all the SkiCo chalets, Gueret comes with all mod cons – hi-fi, hairdryers, minibar – and other ephemeral extras that create something like a home from home – flowers, books, newspapers. The wine is bought centrally with great care, evident enjoyment, and a budget that would make your average chalet girl weep. Even more important, though, is founder David Kemp's approach to the day-to-day running of his chalets.

Mr Kemp's policy is to hire couples (at least 25 years old) to work as manager-cook teams, usually for a spell of two or three seasons. They are, as he puts it, "professional couples on a career path to running their own hotel or restaurant". Some work year-round, either providing summer holidays or preparing the chalets for the next winter. All three teams I have encountered this winter have seemed amiable, sensitive, committed, calm.

The cost of all this – surprise, surprise – is high. Even in low season, a week in a Ski Company chalet costs

£730 to £930 (Val d'Isère chalets stay open to the end of April, dropping to £680), and in the February peak it costs £1,030 to £1,330. These are amounts that will buy you a pretty swanky hotel holiday; and holidays in other upmarket chalets can be had for much less – for example, Meriski's Iberis is £820 at half-term. Simply Ski's Brames is £950, Scott Dunn's Cristal de Roche is £995. But no hotel holiday gives you quite the satisfaction of gathering privately with friends before the log fire of an old chalet, champagne in hand and dinner aromatically imminent. And I haven't encountered in other chalets some of the extras you get with a Ski Company holiday – champagne or aperitifs before dinner, digestifs after, babysitting every night.

The Ski Company currently has space in all its resorts at different times in March and in late April – and a couple of rooms free in Val in mid-February. Contact Abercrombie & Kent 0171-730 5551

### Snow reports

There was some snow last weekend in many resorts in the Alps, but nowhere near enough to transform rocky and icy resort-level runs – and quite a few resorts have had no fresh snow since the first week of the new year. Switzerland has had a particularly thin month, with the lower slopes now closed in many lowish resorts and icy in higher ones, and the upper slopes mainly hard; the extremely high skiing of Zermatt and Saas Fee is among the best to be found. In contrast, practically all Italian resorts had a share of snow last weekend. Austria and France present a more mixed picture, with resort runs open except in a few resorts in northern France; some of the best skiing is to be had in the southern French resorts of Serre-Chevalier and Montgenevre. The Pyrenees remain in good shape, while eastern Europe is getting by. In the US, resorts in California, Utah and Colorado have all had worthwhile snowfalls. New England is recovering from its thaw, with snow forecast this weekend.



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ICELANDAIR



# Wanted: heroic dreamers

Do you have the right stuff to enter our £25,000 travel challenge? By Justine Hardy

On Monday evenings in central London plans for expeditions are hatched behind the big black door of the Royal Geographical Society. The lecturer of the week steps behind the lectern to tell his or her tale of virgin peaks, deep-sea monsters, and desert survival, and the audience leaves inspired. They walk away from the lecture hall down corridors lined with pictures of the great explorers of the past, dreaming their own faces into that gallery of heroes.

On one of these evenings in 1993 many of the mountaineers who were involved in the conquering of Everest met to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Sir Edmund Hillary's ascent on 29 May 1953. Embryonic mountaineers came, too, to hear their stories. One of these was a young solicitor, Philip Leonard.

By the following year he had progressed from dreaming of summits at Monday lectures to joining a mountaineering team. They took on Mount McKinley in Alaska to cut their teeth—in what are reputedly the coldest climbing conditions in the world. Later that year Philip turned to the Map Room, the hallowed inner sanctum of the RGS, to hunt down maps covering the Hindu Kush in search of uncharted peaks to conquer.

"We used the only maps that were available: British survey maps of India from 1928. I ended up setting out to climb our unmarked peak clutching photocopies from the RGS Map Room. Ultimately it was like something from the Great Game; we found a man who drew a map on the back of a cigarette packet telling us to follow a stream, turn left at the big grey boulder and climb." Philip and his companions achieved their expedition goal of making a first, the mountaineering term for unclimbed peaks.

Why, where and how? This is the tricky triplet for the aspiring expeditionary. Why is not so hard to answer. Some people pursue a dream, others go to gather research on topics from the leisurely mating habits of the three-toed sloth to examining why snow is cold. All expeditions start with copious reading, whether it is to try and understand the heartbeat of the destination, or to find a viable route. In London, Stanfords in Covent Garden, the Travel Bookshop in

Notting Hill, Daunt's in Marylebone High Street, and the Traveller's Bookshop in Cecil Court are lined with the stuff of inspiration. Stanfords also has a good map section to furnish your route planning.

So where to go? If you are of the research variety, the destination has probably always been known. For those chasing adventure, the lands of unspoiled beauty are harder and morally more difficult to find. Mountain ranges seem to whip the adventurer's imagination, the Himalayas being the most popular followed by the Andes. Deserts come next. We seem to desire not only to cling to sheer marble rock faces, but also to cross unwelcoming sands with angry camels and not enough water.

Finally, how to do it? For those bent on research, the Royal Geographical Society is not only the great bastion of centuries of exploration, but it is also an expedition advisory centre. Here they receive about 400 applications a year for expedition support, out of which about 100 are given backing.

The purely adventurous usually pay their own way or find a sponsor with an urge to have their name linked to desert storms or a high-altitude drama. It is a charitable twinge towards a young man or woman determined to cartwheel across the Andes or traverse a desert in a wheelbarrow for a deserving cause. And until 26 April Heineken Export, in association with the Independent, is inviting applications for a travel bursary of £25,000. Details of the Wildest Dreams challenge are given opposite.

Expedition Advisory Centre, Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR (0171-581 2057). e-mail: eac@rgs.org  
Daunt Books for Travellers, 83 Marylebone High Street, London W1M 3DE (0171-224 2295)  
The Travel Bookshop, 13-15 Blenheim Crescent, London W11 2EE (0171-229 5260)  
The Travellers' Bookshop, 25 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4EZ (0171-836 9132)  
Stanfords Maps and Travel Bookshop, 12-14 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LP (0171-836 1321)



On top of the world: Philip Leonard near the summit of Mt McKinley

## The Wildest Dreams Travel Challenge

The biggest obstacle to independent travel is cost. So Heineken Export, in association with the Independent, is offering a travel bursary of up to £25,000 to help you overcome this hurdle.

**Who can enter:** Anyone aged between 18 and 35.  
**How to enter:** Fill out an application form giving details of your travel plans. These will be assessed by a panel of experts and a shortlist of applicants will be interviewed. Forms from: tel 0171-231 5432; the Lonely Planet Internet <http://www.lonelyplanet.com.au>, or at STA Travel shops.  
**When to enter:** By 26 April. Winners will be announced on 6 May. We will be making interim awards, if you're planning to leave before then.  
**How much is the prize:** The total bursary is £25,000. The amount awarded is at the judges' discretion. It is possible that one exceptional proposal could win the full amount.



SIMON CALDER

The border dispute between Greece and Turkey might seem the last thing that either country needs for tourism. Trouble in Cyprus, too, in the portion of the island occupied by Turkey. But I bet the present tensions do nothing to deter visitors to the eastern Mediterranean: border disputes actually attract tourists.

Europe sans frontières may still be a bureaucratic fiction, but they don't make borders like they used to. Berlin's appeal evaporated when the Wall came down. Checkpoint Charlie, the most beguilingly grotesque manifestation of East-West conflict, has returned to the pages of Len Deighton. No more Bulgarian border guards rifling through your socks in search of smuggled currency or Albanian customs officials examining visitors' magazines to confiscate lingerie advertisements.

The Foreign Secretary's demand at the front of every passport that the bearer should be allowed "to pass freely without let or hindrance" seems to be having the required effect. Those who feel travel has become a bit too easy can head for those rocky islets presently in dispute. A week ago, none of us had heard of them; now the race is on between entrepreneurs ferrying tourists to meet the long-haired goats who suddenly find themselves at Europe's final frontier.

You would never get away with it at school. "The dog ate my passport," reports Ross Taylor of west London. Bobby, Mr Taylor's Border Collie, munched his way halfway through the travel document, oblivious to the fact that it is Crown property. So Mr Taylor called the Passport Agency's new national information line (0990 210410) to find out if he would still be allowed to take his holiday to Bali.

This new telephone service is interactive, which means you have to say "yes" at the appropriate moment. Since "Has your dog eaten your passport?" was not an option, he chose the final possibility, to speak to a real person. The phone rang once at the far end, then the line went dead.

Mr Taylor checked this a couple of times, then called me and I tried as well. The only advances I discovered were that the system works (or fails to work) equally well if you bark instead of speaking, and that the whole pointless telephonic transaction costs 25 pence a time. The last I heard was that Mr Taylor had set off for Bali anyway, uncertain as to whether he would get any further than Barking. He has promised to report on his progress—watch this space, and your pet.

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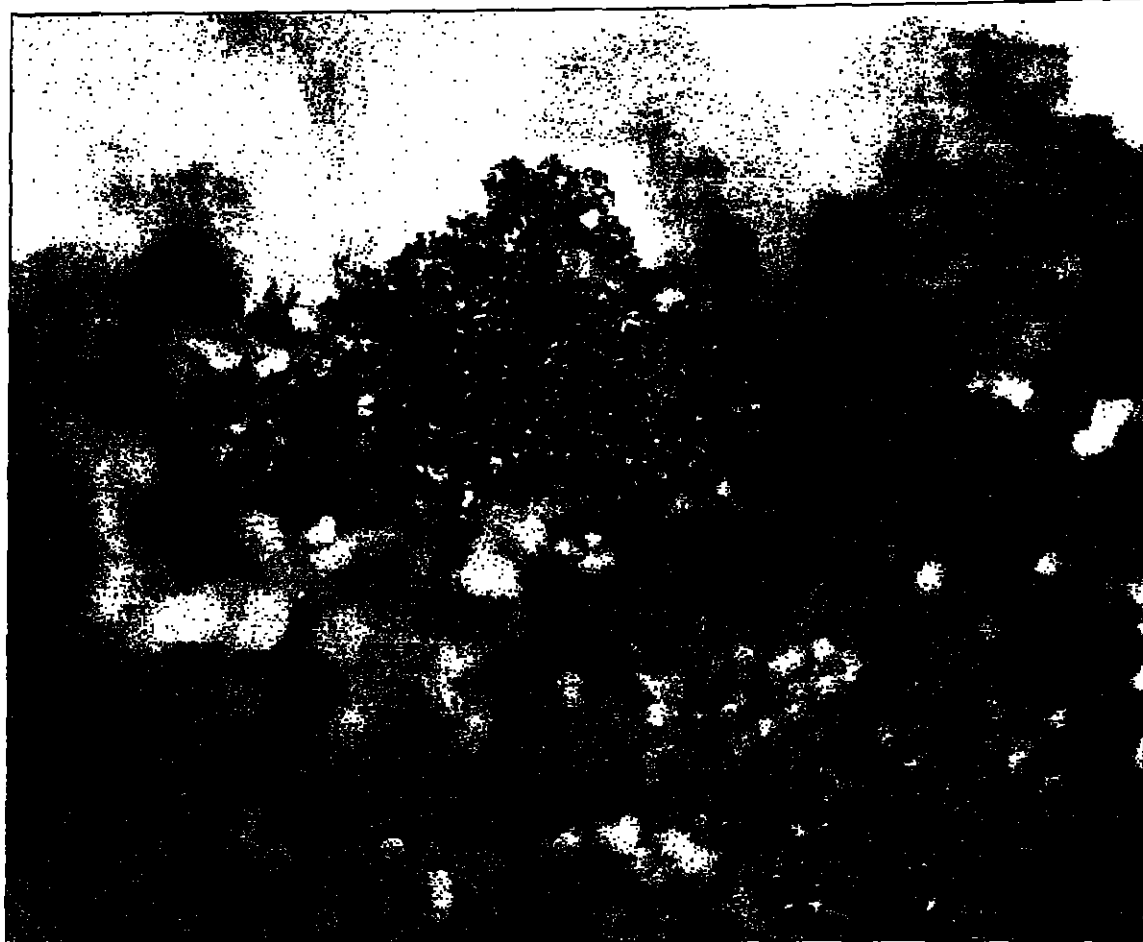
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## gardening / country

# Now is the time to prepare that great summer lunch

The best vegetables are home-grown. Anna Pavord suggests where to get lettuce, leek, bean and tomato plants and seeds



Lettuce is an easy crop, if you can get on top of marauding molluscs

Photograph: David Loftus

Alan Chapman has written from Hightown in Liverpool asking me to suggest "tasty varieties" of vegetables that he can grow in his garden, and to give sources of seed. Now there's a man who has got his priorities right. However hard you slave over Delia and a hot stove you can't expect good results unless you use decent ingredients. Supermarket vegetables look glassily perfect but for taste I'd set home-grown against them any time. There's not the commercial imperative to turn crops round quickly in your own garden. You can give vegetables the time they need to develop flavour and you can pick them just before you want to eat them. With some crops, such as asparagus and sweetcorn, that matters. Both of them deteriorate in taste from the second you cut them. Above all, if you grow your own, you can feel secure in the wholesomeness of what you put in your mouth.

Vegetable growing needs space and if you have a small garden, you may feel that flowers should rule. But there may be a spare allotment within reach that you could use. Or you could throw overboard your preconceived ideas about the "proper" place of vegetables and grow leeks among the petunias, lettuces among the marigolds. Both are superb foliage plants, especially if you seek out the leek 'Bleu de Solaise' (also called 'St Victor') which has a rich purplish-blue sheen on its leaves. As you would expect of an old French variety, it also tastes superb.

If you are clever, you organise your leeks so that you get a steady supply

maturing from autumn right the way through to late spring. Leeks are my favourite winter vegetable and leek tart with bacon, my favourite quick supper. For very early crops, you need to sow seed under cover round about now. I wait to sow seed outside in a drill in March or April, depending on the weather. Last year I sowed 'Autumn Giant' (Thompson & Morgan, £1.49) on 25 March. Seed generally germinates within three weeks.

Different varieties mature at different times. To use before Christmas, you need a type such as 'Autumn Giant', following on with the old favourite 'Musselburgh' or 'Giant Winter' which will stand in good condition to the end of April.

If you don't want to fiddle with seedlings, then order young plants (Marshall's have 'Autumn Mammoth' and 'Giant Winter' on offer) which will be sent out at the beginning of summer. All you have to do then is to poke a row of deep holes about nine inches apart and drop a baby leek into each hole. Slosh water into each hole, so that soil is washed over the roots of the little leeks. Don't worry if their heads scarcely peer over the parapet: the deeper they are planted, the more long, white stem you will have to eat. They are simplicity to grow and miraculously free of pests. If you leave any in the ground, they produce tall flower heads, round greyish-lilac balls which dry beautifully.

Lettuce is another easy crop – if you can keep on top of slugs and snails. Taste is difficult to gauge here, because lettuce seems to be more about texture than taste. But

the best flavoured ones I have grown are 'Tiger' (Marshall's, £1.56), a crisp iceberg type, with a flush of red on the outer leaves; 'Tom Thumb' (Mr Fothergill, 69p), a very popular, small butterhead lettuce; and the unparalleled cos 'Little Gem' (Suttons, 85p). Whatever other lettuces I grow, I always have 'Little Gem' on the go. Last year I tried three new lettuces including 'Everest' (Johnsons, 95p), one of the useful race of loose-leaf lettuces, which you can keep going back to, gathering a few leaves at a time. 'Everest' has handsome foliage the shape of oak leaves. Sow at intervals from April to July and crop it from June to October.

As 'Little Gem' acts as a kind of benchmark among lettuces, so 'Red Alert' does among tomatoes. I first grew this outdoor bush tomato four years ago, sowing the seed towards the end of March, pricking out the seedlings into individual three-inch pots, then setting out the plants after the end of May. You don't need to stake these types, nor pinch out the side-shoots. They just sprawl on the ground, fruiting fit to burst.

The fruits are small, like those of 'Gardener's Delight', not much more than an inch across, but incredibly sweet and tangy. A teetering balance between sweetness and sharpness is the key to taste in tomatoes and you don't get the sweetness without a decent summer. Nobody though could complain about last year's performance.

'Alcane' (Thompson & Morgan, 99p) is well-flavoured, too, and grows outside as happily as it does in a greenhouse. You need to stake it

though and pinch out the side-shoots. It is resistant to greenback and it fruits quite early. 'Dario' (Marshall's, £1.77), which I grew last year for the first time, fruited relatively late but fortunately it was a season when this didn't matter. These were BIG fruit, at least a quarter of a pound each, meaty, brilliant for cooking or fresh salads, thin skinned and well flavoured. Flavour in tomatoes depends a great deal on weather though. And watering. Mine got no water after they have settled in. I think that enhances the flavour and they don't wilt, though they would, of course, if grown waterless in a Gro-bag. 'Dario' is supposed to be grown as a bush, but I trained mine up supports, to keep them away from slugs. Although I took out the side-shoots, it still fruited heavily.

Choosing seeds for this year's crops is complicated by the fact that two new seed catalogues have come into my life, as different from each other as could be. Seeds by Size is hand-typed (then reduced to anti-sized print) on paper that looks as though it has been recycled not once but every week. It is a fantastic list (24 different lettuces, 21 courgettes, 76 pumpkins and squashes, 30 sorts of sweetcorn) put together by John Robert Size. The seed is sold in any quantity you want, from half a gram up to a kilo. If you can't cope with his ready reckoner (I can't) he offers the easy-order option of £1 packets of anything you want. For 'Monstrous di Carentan' lettuces, for 'Paris Silver Skin' onions, for 'Rous Lench' sprouts, this is your man.

The other catalogue is twice the

size – in acreage not varieties offered – is in full, glossy colour and has been stretching my A-level French. This is the 180-page monster from Graines Baumaux which, as well as a ravishing selection of flowers, offers a serious challenge to gourmets. The French beans alone cover seven pages. Well, they would, wouldn't they?

The French take the insides of French beans much more seriously than we do and this catalogue offers a magnificent range of haricots to shell: pale-green flageolet from 'Soissons Vert', brilliantly enamelled beads from 'Cerise du Japon', pink haricots streaked with crimson in 'Coco Rouge de Prague'. The pods of this last one are as extraordinary as the beans, cream, marbled all over with red. I have to try them, even if experience teaches me, as I think it might, that our summers are not usually hot enough or long enough to bring off good crops of shelled beans. But even if they don't ripen fully, they will have been a delight to the eye meanwhile.

Seeds from Graines Baumaux, BP100, 54062 Nancy, France; Seeds by Size, 45 Crouchfield, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 1PA (please send s.a.e.); S.E. Marshall & Co, Wisbech, Cambs PE13 2RF; Thompson & Morgan, Poplar Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 3BU; C88 7QB; Suttons Seeds, Hele Rd, Torquay, Devon TQ2 7JL; Johnsons, London Rd, Boston, Lincs PE21 6BR.

## Snowdrops: two weeks late but worth the wait.

By Anna McKane

The open season for looking round other people's gardens traditionally begins at Easter, but with the recent surge in interest in snowdrops, more gardens are having openings this month.

For many gardeners, the only one they know is the common snowdrop, *Galanthus nivalis*. In fact there are around 200 different named cultivars, varying in height, time of flowering, leaf colour and shape, size of flower, and marking. Some have green splashes on the inner petals, others have a creamy appearance. Some are slightly scented, of honey or almond.

Growers say snowdrops are two weeks late this year, probably because of last year's drought, but as most big collections have different varieties, there should be plenty to see.

Where to see snowdrops: Gardens are open in the afternoon, unless stated.

Cambridgeshire: Anglesy Abbey, Lode (01223 811200). Guided walks on a 100-acre National Trust garden. Open 10.11.17-18, 24-25 Feb.

Dorset: Kingston Lacy, Wimborne Minster (01202 883402). Call for dates.

Gloucestershire: Cinderford Cottage, Dymock. 120 named varieties. Open 8, 13, 15, 18, 20, 22 Feb.

Michinhampton Gardens, near Stroud. Open Sunday 18 Feb from 11am.

Hampshire: Brandy Mount House, Alresford (01962 732189). More than 100 named cultivars, plus aconites and daphnes. 7.10 and 11 Feb, from 11am.

Hereford and Worcester: Dial Park, Chaddesley Corbett. Open 22 Feb.

Kent: Goodnestone Park, Wingham, near Canterbury. Open 11 Feb.

Lincolnshire: Three gardens a few miles north of Bourne are open on 17.18 Feb: Westcombe, 25 High St, Rippingale; Manor Farm, Kelsby; 21 Chapel St, Haccorby.

Belton House (01476 66116), which featured in TV's *Pride & Prejudice*, is opening on 11 Feb, 11-3pm.

Nottinghamshire: Hodssock Priory, Blyth. The big one for anyone in the Midlands. They had 12,500 visitors last year. The snowdrops have been displayed for 30 years to produce huge drifts.

Shropshire: Erway Farm House, three miles north of Ellesmere. One-acre garden with 60 varieties. Open 25 Feb.



Surrey: Wisley Garden, near Woking. The Royal Horticultural Society's showpiece garden has some 120 snowdrop cultivars. Open every day, members only on Sundays. Wiltshire: Lacock Abbey Gardens (01249 730227). Twelve-acre National Trust garden with a big display of snowdrops and alpine crocus in a woodland setting.

Open 18, 25 Feb, 3 March. Wales: Chirk Castle, Clwyd. Snowdrop openings on 3, 4, 10, 11 Feb. Northern Ireland: Rowallane Garden, Rathfriland, County Down (01238 510131). Open weekdays in Feb and March. The National Trust has a list of snowdrop openings. Send an s.a.e. to: Membership Dept, PO Box 39, Bromley, Kent BR1 3XL.

Snowdrops bulbs are available from: Avon bulbs, near South Petherton, Somerset (01460 242177). Broadleigh Gardens, near Taunton, Somerset (01823 286231). Plants can be ordered. RHS Show, Vincent Square, London on 20, 21 Feb. Snowdrops on view and sale.

Will visitors to Wisley, the Royal Horticultural Society's garden in Surrey, be treated to the sight of august members of the society, like the young tree lovers of Newbury, lashing themselves to the larches and taking up residence in the boughs of the metasequoias in Wisley's pinetum? The society is pressing ahead with plans to build a massive multi-million-pound complex at Wisley, a centre for science and education, which will include a large library and an exhibition hall.

Elizabeth Greaves of Ealing thinks that trees are more important than bricks and mortar and has tabled a resolution for the society's AGM that no building should take place in the pinetum. The RHS argues that its computer-generated plan, published



### CUTTINGS

in its members' journal, shows the buildings sympathetically placed on the site.

Mrs Greaves replies that if the society had printed the actual plans of the buildings rather than the computer-aided view, members might have been able to see rather more clearly that the library will account for the felling of 13 trees, and the rest of the project another 18. Members will vote on the resolution at the AGM on 20 February.

### Christmas competition results

In the first month of this year, a disabled duck in Norfolk was fitted with an artificial leg. The RSPCA rescued a stag caught up in a child's swing, a football match had to be abandoned after a player was knocked out by a falling crossbar, a man in Somerset put his house on the market because he couldn't stand the noise of the seals barking in the wildlife park next door, scientists said that today's crows are as intelligent as Stone Age humans, and a well-dressed artificial leg was found in the Isle of Wight.

All of which may help to explain why none of our readers found the correct answer to our Christmas "rural cowpat" competition

to identify the one strange but false story among the strange but true.

Many entrants thought that a northern university could not possibly be offering a degree course in Yorkshire Studies: almost as many could not believe that a gypsy had cultivated a square tomato: several were convinced that sexually over-active rabbits could not possibly set off a burglar alarm. Implausible perhaps, but all those stories came with the full authority of rural reporting behind them. We did, however, make up the one about morris dancers adversely affecting supplies of goat's milk. Very implausible, morris dancers.

William Hartston

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# People who live in glass houses

The Butts transformed a derelict palm house into an ideal home. By Anne Spackman

As a teenager cultivating her small patch at boarding school, Jenny Butt always dreamt of having a walled garden. At the time she probably imagined it as part of a traditional country house. Instead, a walled garden is what she and her husband have ended up living inside.

The outstanding period feature of their garden home is not a fireplace or cornice, but a spectacular 30ft high palm house, flanked on either side by long, low vine houses. Their main living quarters have been carved out of an assortment of outbuildings and potting-sheds which run for 140 feet behind the great glass facade.

Twenty years ago, the buildings were derelict remains lying in gardens that had been ploughed over in the war. They belonged to a nurseryman, who could not afford the £250 demanded by a scrap metal merchant to pull the place down. Instead he put the cast-iron wreck, an assortment of potting sheds and coal bunkers, and the walled garden in which they stood up for sale. "A most unusual country property," the advert said. When Loren and Jenny Butt saw the ad they were living in an Edwardian house in Harpenden, Hertfordshire. "We had no plans to move," says Loren, "but we came whizzing down the next day, looked at it and decided to buy it. It had to be saved."

Few people would have agreed. The dock leaves in the garden grew six feet high, the beds and paths had long since disappeared and barely a pane of glass remained in the palm house. To Jenny and Loren the place was ideal. Their teenage children thought they were mad.

Loren Butt was working as an engineer with Norman Foster's architectural practice. Modern buildings were his work and his hobby. To him the palm

house at Sherfield in Hampshire represented a fascinating moment in architectural history.

Jenny's focus was on the gardens. As a trained horticulturalist with a passion for growing plants she relished the opportunity to get the kitchen garden back into working order. Their photo albums of the past 20 years chronicle the transformation from wreck to listed building alongside the regular family snapshots. Papers and documents chronicle the earlier history of their home.

The palm house was built in 1898 by the Messager Company for a Hampshire diamond merchant called John Taylor. The company's client list reads like an abridged version of Debutts. It seems that in the Victorian era of Crystal Palace and grand winter gardens anyone who was anyone had a glass house.

John Taylor was no exception. He decided to move the central vine house in his kitchen garden and replace it with a grand palm house. The finished article featured in *Gardeners' Chronicle* in 1903 in much the same way as a smart conservatory might feature in an issue of *House and Garden*. The palm house was heated and ventilated to keep a constant temperature of around 25C and 80 per cent humidity suitable for the exotic flora that were starting to appear in England. The back was a living wall of moss, planted with orchids and ferns. Around the edges and in the centre, huge palms were displayed on iron benches making it a place to walk around and admire, rather than a room to sit in.

Now the palm house has a distinctly Mediterranean feel with olive, fig and mimosa inside and heavy clumps of rosemary and lavender outside. Jenny Butt chose the plants as much for their scent as their looks. The iron castings which



No rest for the palm-house dwellers: Jenny and Loren Butt at work

Photograph: Jane Baker

set off the Heath Robinson method of opening and closing the windows still operate smoothly. Loren Butt shows them off like a proud parent.

The vast lawns of the garden have several beds of vegetables and fruits - peaches, pears, plums, damsons, loganberries, blackberries, medlar, quince - Jenny has tried the lot. It was four years before she planted her first border. Now one runs the entire length of the listed wall behind the house, dominated by large shrubs such as choisya, buddleia and pampas grasses. The workload is too heavy now for Jenny, which is why they are selling up and moving on.

The regular living quarters were very much Loren Butt's work. In the large bothy that once housed the gardeners he created a kitchen, dining area and living-room. From there a long corridor leads down to the main bedroom, with two

small bedrooms, two bathrooms, a large office, laundry and larder in between. This is their winter quarters and the glass houses are for summer.

The palm house has been the setting for a wedding, a baptism and numerous parties which converted the Butts' teenage sons to its merits. Friends who knew them in more conventional times have been astonished that such a place could exist. Loren's old colleague Norman Foster has dropped by a few times, most memorably in his helicopter. "He was on his way to Wiltshire and offered to drop me off," Loren recalls. "Yes," says Jenny, "he landed on the lawn and blew the runner beans down."

The Walled Garden, Sherfield on Loddon, is for sale through John D Wood in Winchester (01962 863131) for £280,000.

## At one with your garden ...

Two more homes created from gardeners' bothies are for sale in Surrey. The Gardens, Capel, started life as a bothy at Grenehurst Park: the old wall of the kitchen garden is now the flat front of this two-storey, five-bedroom, house. The two-acre garden includes a Victorian apple walk, cherry, fig, pear and plum trees. Browns at Cranleigh (01483 267070) is asking £300,000.

The Round House, Park Hatch, Hascombe was also once a gardener's bothy. It now has a round tower and two wings. The walled gardens, which once supplied the Park Hatch estate with fruit and flowers, have continued to provide a living, with more recent customers including Kensington Palace. Browns in Cranleigh is asking £425,000 for the four-bedroom property.

## Househunter Chipping Campden, Gloucs



Kingcombe House is for connoisseurs of furniture and gardens, being the joint brainchild of the designer Sir Gordon Russell and the landscape gardener Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe. Built of Cotswold stone in 1924, the house overlooks the market town of Chipping Campden. It has five reception rooms, six bedrooms and bathrooms and four dressing rooms. The garden also features a series of "rooms" including the Cherry Orchard, the Pink Garden, the Victorian Garden and a series of troughs cascading into a moat. Savills in Banbury (01295 263355) is asking £750,000.

## For What It's Worth

The number of estate agents reporting falling house prices has halved in the last six months. In July 1995 one third of agents in the monthly survey by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors said prices were going down. Now the figure has shrunk to one in six. A similar number of agents saw increases in business in the normally dark days of November and December, while 35 per cent said business had dropped off. There are sporadic outbursts of optimism but the majority of agents report that business is quiet and that buyers will look at nothing even marginally over-priced.

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<p><b>Auctions</b></p> <p><b>BENSONS AUCTIONS</b></p> <p>By Order of Mortgagee</p> <p>North West: 19th February</p> <p>London &amp; South East: 23rd February</p> <p>Midlands: 26th February</p> <p>North West: 26th February</p> <p>For Catalogue Tel: 0891 51 77 22</p> <p>Freeby House, Northampton</p>	<p><b>Buckinghamshire</b></p> <p><b>JORDANS</b></p> <p>Impressive 19th house in peaceful 'cottage' village. 4 beds, 2 acres, 4 outbuildings. Large living room, inglenook, fireplace, Aga, gas CH, central heating, mature trees and hedges, pergola.</p> <p><b>£380,000</b></p> <p>Private sale</p> <p>01494 87 4999</p>	<p><b>East Anglia</b></p> <p><b>NORFOLK COUNTRY</b></p> <p>Converted CHAPEL, wealth of character, offering open plan reception, three beds (one on suite)</p> <p><b>£91,500</b></p> <p>Six-bed GRADE II Timber Framed House in central location in popular market town. Further acreage and PDS.</p> <p><b>OFFICE/GENERAL STORES, two kit, bike rm, two baths, courtyard, swimming, ggr.</b></p> <p><b>£125,000</b></p> <p>Telephone: <b>01379 641362</b></p> <p><b>HAMILTON SMITH</b></p> <p>SOLE AGENTS</p>	<p><b>Sell your home for as little as £50 per advertisement</b></p> <p><b>INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY</b></p> <p><i>Saving Up To 70% On Our Normal Advertising Rates*</i></p> <p>Advertise your property in the Independent on Sunday's award winning Sunday Review magazine. The advertisement appears in the module format shown here, with 40 words of copy complemented by a full colour photograph of your home.</p> <p><b>NR LEICESTER</b></p> <p>Immaculate three bed apartment in former 18th century Lodge 14 miles from city centre. Large lounge with fireplace, kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms, small garden, garage.</p> <p><b>£274,950 o.n.o.</b></p> <p>Days 0171 293 2343</p> <p><b>The Cost</b></p> <p>The more Sunday advertisements you book, the cheaper the cost per insert.</p> <p>1 x Sunday Advertisement costs £70</p> <p>2 x Sunday Advertisements cost £120 (£60 each)</p> <p>3 x Sunday Advertisements cost £150 (£50 each)</p> <p>*Normal Property advertising rates: 1 advertisement £162</p> <p>Fill in this coupon and send payment with a colour photograph and up to 40 words of copy to: Property Team, Classified Advertising, 19th Floor, Independent Newspaper, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Offer available to private advertisers only. Deadline for receipt of copy is the Tuesday 12 days prior to Sunday publication. Commercial advertising package available on request.</p> <p>NAME.....</p> <p>ADDRESS.....</p> <p>I require <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 (tick appropriate box) Sunday Advertisement(s) at a total cost of £.....</p> <p>Please enclose a cheque for this amount made payable to 'Independent' or alternatively fill in your Visa/Access/Amex/Diners Club details:</p> <p>CREDIT CARD NO..... EXPIRY DATE..... SIGNATURE.....</p> <p>For advice or more information call 'The Property Team' on 0171-293 2343 or 0171-293 2302</p>
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## THEATRE

The Charing Room James Macdonald, one of the *Independent's* Faces of '96, directs David Storey's 1970 smash, the last in the immensely successful Season of Royal Court Classics, *Duke of York's*; *London WC2: In preview, opens Wed*  
Twelfth Night John Rattallack's warmly enjoyable production (above) is short on melancholy and long on well-played humour; *Hewlett, Crawley*  
The Norman Conquests Quintessential Ayckbourn: three interlinked comedies about the same people which can be seen in any order. One of his finest and funniest achievements. *Satisfactory*  
*Playhouse*



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 Simply Red: Mick Hucknall & Co host a few top stadium dates. Formulaic pop soul for the better couples. **perfect, London Arena, W10**  
 When: **Upper** Recently just 17-year-old pop instants, **now 18** Raze have zoomed into top 20 and are blurring with adolescent audiences. Catch them while it lasts. **London Joiners Arms, W10**

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# EVENTS

## Bridgewater

**Sammy's Swingin' Vintage Choppers**, planet and stage show featuring **Hurricane Bones** this week-end inspired by jazz, soul, African and gospel traditions. **Bridgewater Arts Centre** Cause Street (01278-427200) Today 11.30am-12.30pm. £4.

## Farnham

**Book Fair** Thousands of rare, second-hand and antiquarian books for sale. **Farnham Maltings Bridge Square** (01252-726341) Sun 10am-4.30pm, Sat, closed free.

## London

**Real Racing And Spectral Show** Display of racing motorcycles together with appearances by the personalities who ride them. **Alexandra Palace** Wood Green N22 (0181-362 2121) Bk: Alexandra Palace. 2-4 Pkts, Sun-  
day. £7.

**London Vehicle International Ltd** Show from antique dolls to reproductions **Royal Horse-  
cavalry Society** 14th Greyhound Street SW1  
(0171-491-4333) @ St James's Park/Victoria  
Park (Sun 4pm-5p, 2p, child 50p).

**Magical Fair** Toy figures, books, prizes, pic-  
tures, models, wargames, military and  
model railways. **Early 18th century, Reg  
National** Hotel Westmore Place WC1 (0171-  
637 2488) @ Russell Square. Sun 10am-  
4pm. £4.

# AUCTIONS

**Buttler Slot machines** - What the Buttler Saw,

● **FAIR GAME** (L)

ford makes her  
1230, 235, 4A  
756 (S-11, 50)

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9287)	Joseph
5308	Phil
	Rice

7.30	10 F
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[illegible]

Men's Violin Concerto

ony. Tonight 8pm.  
81-648 9291;

Purveyors' cognate wedding music, metal railway rolling stock and other objects, collectables. Wednesday (12 noon) at the Bedford Auctioneers, 20 Newman Street, Wrexham, Peasegood (01274-266366).

Rail, British Containers and 86 Gigs. Well Cuck, carved by John A. Hodge. Clock – furniture, paintings, pocket watches. Tuesday (12 noon). Hamilton Osborne King (01-298 5011).

Silver, Vintage and Modern Country and country style furniture, seat cushions (Cam), Chiffonier Grand & Crested, 2 Clifton Road (01223-133434).

Upple. Over 600 lots of books and antiques, crockery, china and other bygonas and collectables. Wednesday (flam). Marlow & Son, 33 Monks Road (01522-529864).

Waresale. 800 lots of costumes and related accessories. Woolfenden (6.30pm) at the Grandstand, Worcester Racecourse. Tradeonly (0121-446 1794).

Unlisted, Beryl Single corner collection of crystal chandeliers, candelabras, glass chandelier equipment, £60,000 postcards, 1,500 books, costume jewellery, near Staybury (Hill). Stephen Jones P., n. Penrhynville (01595-370709).

Surroundings. Electrical and gas appliances, modern and antique furnishings and household goods. Monday (flam) at the Auction Mart, Northampton (0432-333333).

Postcards. Traditional and contemporary art, including warlike from "Lionheart" Hobbs, and the estate of the late Downager Lady L. Lewis. Thursday (flam). Dorey, 200 St James's Place, Auction House, Aberdeen (01756-61144).

Purple. Metropolitan police station and recovered goods. Heathrow lost property (01-270 0100) or HM Customs and Excise, Thurway (9.30am) at Lloyd's International Auctions, 118 Putney Bridge Road, south west London (081-786 7777).

Antique. Jewellery, carpets, collectables.

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Wednesday (9am) at Decongest Priority.  
Drewett News (014535-1234).  
Antique Furniture, Carpets and decorations.  
Monday - Tuesday (10.30am), Criterion Salesrooms,  
53 Essex Road, London N1 (0171-399 5077).  
Billingsgate, west London. Tuesday - antique and  
decorative furniture (10.30am), Oriental car-  
pets (1pm), Wednesdays - Oriental carpets  
and Eastern artworks (10.30am). Sunday's  
Summer Place (01402-793933).  
Antique Trade Centre (011-9340957). Government  
Auction News (013-733 7300, fax-  
back 013-622468)

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## FAIRS

**Sunday: Antiques and Collectors at RAF**  
Sunderby, 5 miles from Newark, Last day  
tomorrow. (Arlene Siskewit 01246-812497,  
Cockle Donington Antiques at the Fairbairn  
Centre today and tomorrow (01455-234085)  
**Shifnal, Three-Day Antiques at Bingley Hall,**  
County Shropshire, next Friday, Saturday  
and Sunday, over 350 stands (Bourman 0115-  
2643333).  
**Classic Interiors (Antiques for Interiors),**  
tomorrow at Orchard House Hall, King's  
Road, southwest London (Burgess 011-254  
2345).  
**North Norfolk Big Survey at the Rembrandt**  
Centre, Fakenham, North Elmham, tomorrow  
(0113-288 3885).

**North Sund**

**DIFFERENTIATION**  
**Using Some Evidence**

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Archeological | 100  
per cent

and Library.  
Baldwin, 1898

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H. Hana Song has been  
a Spm Living Prayer  
Since 1971. All About You

1. *Staphylococcus aureus* (ATCC 12228)  
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# Radio

by Robert Hanks

**TFI Friday 6pm C4.** "Thank Four It's Friday", just in case you were wondering, as Chris Evans (*above*) hopes to continue his winning streak in the 6pm slot once made essential by both *Ready Steady Go* and *The Tube* (53880).

**Alison's Last Mountain 9.30pm BBC1.** K2 was climber Alison Hargreaves's last climb — she died on it last year. Chris Terrill's film follows Hargreaves's husband and their two children on a journey of remembrance to K2 (3048538).

**Welsh Rarebits 10pm R2.** Glenys Kinnock smeared with melted cheese? Alas, no: just an unimaginative pun as the title for her survey of culture in Wales, which takes over the Radio 2 Arts Programme slot

## Sunday Television and Radio

## ITV/Regions

[illegible]

won, drew trumps and exited with his heart. East won and switched to ♣Q. This was allowed to hold and now declarer was back in business.

Unable to play a second club safely, East led a second heart on which South discarded his losing diamond. Now the timing was perfect for a squeeze: declarer ruffed the next heart lead and cashed his remaining trumps, forcing East to unguard either clubs or hearts. An immediate second heart from East, followed by a third if declarer discards if and an eventual club switch if he discards again would have finished South's chances.

**FAIRS**

## EVENTS





## The big picture

sex, lies and videotape  
Sun 10.25pm C4

The word "Wonderland" was flourished when sex, lies and videotape (no doubt Peter York would tell us the lower-case title is very 1980s) was released in 1989. Steven Soderbergh, the director of this steamy, Deep South love rectangle, displayed a sureness of touch way beyond his 26 years, and seemed destined for greatness. Sadly, he may have peaked too soon, as his subsequent work has failed to live up to the promise of this arresting story of sex and sensibility, starring James Spader and Annie MacDowell (above).

## Television preview

RECOMMENDED VIEWING THIS WEEKEND  
by Gerard Gilbert

Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime. No, we're not talking some New Labour boot camp, but a thoroughly liberal-progressive establishment that takes young offenders, makes them face their feelings and take responsibility for their actions. I should say *look*, since Peper Harrow in Surrey, a centre that promoted treatment rather than punishment, closed down a couple of years ago. We meet it in 1973, through a *Man Alive* report, and the experiment conducted in *Therapeutic* (Sun BBC2) is quite simple: to randomly select six boys from that 1973 film and meet them now - seeing if their re-conversion rates are any better than the depressing three out of four young offenders who return to crime after a spell in conventional remand centres.

One of the six was last heard of leaving prison in 1991, but he's the exception. The others have respectively filled out into their late thirties now: one a psychiatric nurse, another director of a similar establishment and have broken the cycle that, one of them says, would have led him to murder. The film is a short,

sharp, pleasant surprise, and opposition parties should take a look. Presumably, such a regime would be anathema to Michael Howard. Sadly, it just might smack too much of the 1960s for Jack Straw. Ruby Wax is on safer ground this week, Malibu to be precise, in *Ruby Wax Meets...* Pamela Anderson (Sun BBC2). Actually, we get precious little insight into the *Sun's* favourite actress, except that she speaks as if pumped hard full of helium instead of breath-enhancing materials. Most of the film is spent with Ruby bravely cavorting in a bikini on the *Baywatch* set, creating a comic discrepancy between her own imperfect form and those of the bouncy extras.

Thousands of miles from this sun-drenched hedonism, *Everyman* (Sun BBC1) goes inside a Benedictine convent in the suburbs of Chester to see what drives women to a life of getting up before the milkman, sewing wimples and prayer. A fascinating, typically thoughtful film discovers a variation on the old joke that travel narrows the mind; the outside world, believe the nuns, squashes the soul.

In a world full of horrific injustice, the career of

one international athlete might not amount to a whole bill of beans, but even if sport is another country to you, you'll still be intrigued by *The Diane Modahl Story* (Sat BBC2). This is not just because Modahl (the 800 metre runner, who was sent home from the 1994 Commonwealth Games after a drug test pointed to testosterone abuse) and her husband, Vincente, are such plausibly nice people; but also because it's a satisfying medical mystery story. How did the male hormone get into the urine sample? (This is, if you don't believe Modahl injected herself with the performance enhancer.)

Now, maybe it's because I'm a Londoner, but I could never understand why anyone would want to take a holiday in the nation's capital. The sheer hell of it - but then maybe that's what Parisians think of the Eurostar weekenders clogging up the Boulevard St Germain. *The Tourist* (Sun BBC2) looks at how London caters to its 10 million or so annual visitors, and what they want out of their (on average) six-day visit. A clue: it begins with "hi" - and I don't mean the Hammamsmith fly-over or the Harrow Road.



## The big match

Sat 7.15pm BBC1

After the first round, Scotland vs France, the latter led by the legendary Philippe Saint-André (above), is already taking on the look of a Championship decider. Scotland, under the inspirational leadership of Rob Wainwright, exceeded everyone's expectations but their own in beating Ireland two weeks ago in Dublin. Can they do the same to the resurgent French at Murrayfield? England, meanwhile, must again attempt to put their theories of expansive rugby into practice, against a new-look Welsh line-up at Twickenham.

# Saturday Television and Radio

## BBC1

- 7.25 News; Weather (3969357).
- 7.30 Children's BBC: SuperTed (9705116). 7.35 The Arbox Bunch (2514870). 7.50 Inzognid (1069785). 8.05 Willy Fog (2939672).
- 8.30 The New Adventures of Superman: Here's a tip for would-be newspaper moguls: Intriguing use of typewriter in their bid for the Daily Planet (R) (S) (9283727).
- 9.15 Live and Kicking: Andi and Emma's guests are Noel Edmonds, and Coronation Street actresses Angela Griffin and Tracy Shaw (hairdressers Flora and Maxine) (S) (12532609).
- 12.12 Weather (6244319).
- 12.15 Grandstand: 12.20 Football Focus. 12.55 Racing from Chesham: 1.00 Huntsmen Handicap Chase. 1.10 News. 1.15 Rugby Union: Five Nations preview. 1.25 Racing from Chesham: 1.30 Prestige Novice Hurdle. 1.40 Skiing: highlights of today's men's World Cup downhill from Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany. 1.55 Racing from Chesham: 2.00 Coral Grand National Trial. 2.15 Rugby Union: England vs Wales at Twickenham; kick-off at 3.00pm. See The big match, above. 4.40 Final Score. 5.00 Rugby Union: highlights of Scotland vs France at Murrayfield (76423593).
- 5.30 News; Weather (739131).
- 5.40 Local News; Weather (963715).
- 5.45 Ten and Jerry's Greatest Hits. Good tidings (R) (S) (52222).
- 6.05 Jim Davidson's Generation Game. The Chinese State Circus find themselves in on the act (S) (908680).
- 7.00 Noel's House Party. A Gotcha for Paul Nicholas (S) (865845).
- 7.50 The National Lottery Live. Antha's back, while Diana Ross's finger is on the button (S) (589357).
- 8.05 Casualty. Prozac and knives enter the equation in this week's slice of medical drama (S) (56152).
- 8.55 News; Sport; Weather (Followed by National Lottery Update) (338970).
- 9.15 Appointment for a Killing (William A. Graham 1993 US). Kelsey Grammer, known to his fans as sitcom psychoanalyst Frasier Crane, takes a change of pace as the FBI agent investigating Corbin Bensen's serial-killer dentist (S) (833883).
- 10.45 Match of the Day. Newcastle United vs Sheffield Wednesday (S) (1341870).
- 11.50 Pulp (Michael Hodges 1972 UK). Hodges' follow-up to Get Carter took him to the West. This underrated thriller stars Michael Caine as a hack sent to Italy to ghost former movie star Mickey Rooney's memoirs. But Rooney's actor had been involved with the Mafia - and when he ships up murdered, Caine turns investigator (135067).
- 1.25 Weather (1160891). To 1.30am.

REGIONS. Wales: 5.40 Wales on Saturday. NI: 5.00pm Northern Ireland Results. 5.40 Inside Ulster News.

## BBC2

- 7.15 Open University: The Enlightenment (5476852).
- 7.40 Planet Earth (1967816). 8.05 Finding a Voice (4739541). 8.30 The Car Industry: A Level Playing Field (6143767). 8.55 Reindeer in the Arctic (7698852). 9.20 Climates of Opinion: Global Warming (9757406). 10.10 Just Seventeen: The Geometry of Patterns (1308339).
- 10.35 The Great Iron and Steel Rollercoaster (9292357). 11.00 Open Advice (S) (88831).
- 11.25 Overture: Dimanche en Arjou (3572951).
- 11.50 The Open Mind (6400203).
- 12.15 Classic Animal Tracks (S) (6921086).
- 12.25 Wildlife on Two. "The Transformers". Tadpoles become frogs, caterpillars grow up to be butterflies, and so forth (R) (S) (9706593).
- 12.55 One, Two, Three (Billy Wilder 1961 US). Snappy comedy, shot in Germany as the Russians put up the Berlin Wall, is a sort of Cold War Pygmalion, with Coca Cola executive James Cagney having to transform the East German worker who has taken up with the boss's daughter into something presentable to daddy (63148715).
- 2.40 Sabrina Fair (Billy Wilder 1954 US). A chance to compare the Harrison Ford remake with the Humphrey Bogart/Audrey Hepburn original about a chauffeur's daughter in love with a playboy. Bogart apparently owned Wilder's three-year-old son of having written the script (55406357).
- 4.30 Book of Esther. People who claim to have been abducted by aliens. Arthur C Clarke beams in (R) (S) (45).
- 5.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show (778338). \*
- 5.40 TOTP2 (S) (433715).
- 6.25 The Diane Modahl Story. The athlete's fight to clear her name. See Preview, above (S) (660932).
- 7.15 News and Sport; Weather (862932).
- 7.30 Scrutiny. The Environment Select Committee's enquiry into housing need. Triona Holden explains (763609).
- 8.05 The Trial. A man who stabbed his neighbour after a two-year feud is up for attempted murder. In this recycled and updated series shot inside real Scottish courts (Followed by Talking Cezanne) (R) (442262).
- 9.00 Knowing Me, Knowing You...with Alan Partridge. Unlikely tabloid material. Steve Coogan, and his spoof chat show (R) (S) (7116).
- 9.30 Peter Jay's Eighties. How we learnt to shop, and came over all aspirational and designer (52777).
- 10.00 The Mosquito Coast (Peter Weir 1986 US). Harrison Ford and family go self-sufficient in the jungle in a successful, finely worked adaptation of Paul Theroux's novel. Co-stars Helen Mirren and River Phoenix (S) (221883).
- 11.55 Weatherview (153390).
- 12.00 The Lie (Franco Margolin 1992 Fr). Pregnant Parisian journalist Nathalie Baye discovers she is HIV positive - and starts investigating her lover's past (10655). To 1.30am.

## ITV/London

- 6.00 GMTV. 6.00 News; Weather. 6.10 Eat Your Words. 6.40 Barney and Friends. 7.15-8.25 Saturday Disney. The guests are Kermit the Frog, and actress Alyson Butler from Call Red. 8.25 Mighty Morphin Power Rangers (2753680).
- 9.25 Telegenicmagical. Teri Hatcher, Lois Lane from The New Adventures of Superman, gives chat (3221883).
- 10.25 It's Not Just Saturday. East 17 and actor Clive Wedderburn (from The Bill) are the guests (S) (6693406).
- 11.30 The Chart Show (R) (S) (82048).
- 12.30 Flashframe (R) (69067).
- 1.00 News; Weather (61409999).
- 1.05 Local News; Weather (61491970).
- 1.10 Movies, Games and Videos (84971067).
- 1.40 Cartoon Time (44567375).
- 2.05 The Likely Lads (Michael Tuchner 1976 UK). Whatever happened to the Likely Lads? was one of the very best TV sitcoms that transferred successfully to the big screen, helped in no short measure by Clement and La Frenais's hands on the script (247932).
- 3.45 Airwolf (R) (612932).
- 4.45 News; Sport; Weather (1349593).
- 5.05 London Tonight; Sport (5655135).
- 5.20 New Baywatch. A sports magazine is looking for the perfect model for its swimwear issue. Oh yes (S) (1488929).
- 6.15 Barrymore. Spike Milligan guests (S) (147203).
- 7.15 Blind Date. Nick and Beaky report on their white-water rafting trip to France (Including Lottery Result) (S) (176715).
- 8.15 Beadle's Hot Shots (S) (453593).
- 8.45 News; National Lottery Update; Weather (310574).
- 9.00 Kavanagh QC. Repeat pilot episode of the drama series starring John Thaw as a top defence barrister, here defending an overbridge (S) (5864).
- 11.00 Pale Rider (Clint Eastwood 1985 US). Clint rides into town once more to avenge the righteous and meek, in this neo-classical western with a good eye for landscape. Chris Penn and Richard Kiel are in support (24567406).
- 1.10 Big Fight Special. Unbeaten light-welterweight Jimmy Neary takes on Ohio's Terry Sutherland. Plus, Jimmy Neary vs Adrian "Precious" Stone, and the eagerly awaited pro debut of 21-year-old Matthew Ellis, the 1995 English ABA heavyweight champ (2487487).
- 1.55 Funny Business. The Leicester Comedy Festival, which is a concept that Joe Orton would no doubt have enjoyed, is profiled (5304297).
- 2.25 Pyjama Party. Claudia Schiffer guests on the girly show (S) (5085901).
- 3.45 God's Gift. Dating game (3953592).
- 4.40 TV Sport Classics II (85174075).
- 5.05 Coach (S) (573365). To 5.30am.

## Channel 4

- 6.05 Sesame Street (R) (4250135).
- 7.05 Ulysses 31 (R) (7371488).
- 7.30 Super Mario Brothers (R) (5869947).
- 7.40 First Edition. Jon Snow and the junior current affairs show (8967067).
- 8.00 Trans World Sport (62425).
- 9.00 The Morning Line (S) (14932).
- 10.00 Blitz! Highlights of Super Bowl XXX (58048).
- 11.00 Gazella Football Italia (61512).
- 12.00 The Late Late Show (S) (39338).
- 12.30 The Love of Benji (Joe Camp 1977 US). Somewhat slow on the heels of the likeable doggie movie, Benji, the eponymous mutt is resurrected and involved in another kidnapping storyline (2739815).
- 2.05 Channel 4 Racing from Sandown. The 2.25, 3.00, 3.35 and 4.10pm races (S) (97008796).
- 4.35 Flying High. Short Stories repeat about a South Wales flying club (4347425).
- 5.05 Brookside Omnibus (S) (8533680).
- 6.30 Right to Reply. Were Richard and Judy unfair to Harriet Harman? Plus, umbrage taken at Everyman's look at Christian Cable Europe (S) (86).
- 7.00 A Week in Politics. An interview with shadow Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, and the way Tory MPs are fleeing marginal seats for safer ones. Plus, should barbed wire be a shave to woe the voters? (4999).
- 8.00 Divine Magic. Human sacrifice in the Aztec world (S) (5749).
- 9.00 Auf Wiedersehen Pet. The boys are banned from the local pub (5444406).
- 10.05 Father Ted. A steamy novelist (Gemma Craven) comes to stay on the island (R) (S) (658067).
- 10.35 Eurotrash. Repeat reports on Jordy, the six-year-old French rapper banned because his parents are accused of exploitation, and Tabatha Cash - law student, kick-boxer and Europe's top porn star (R) (S) (683086).
- 11.10 The White Room. With Ocean Colour Scene, Echoberry and Rocket from the Crypt, who reputedly sound like The Clash go Vegas (S) (474425).
- 12.05 The Gullie Show. Yesterday's gibberish with the so-called "babes with attitude". Wrong on both counts (R) (S) (8633568).
- 1.00 The Legend of the 4 Kings. Manga cartoon (S) (2262365).
- 1.55 Twilight Zone: Shatterday. Bruce Willis plays a man who dials his own home from a bar - only to find himself on the other end of the line. Directed by Wes Craven (S) (5484487).
- 2.20 Baadasssss TV. Isaac Hayes and Carl Kung Fu Fighting Douglas interviewed, and a profile of black porn star, Sean Michaels (R) (S) (1381159).
- 2.50 Big Girls Blues (7786687).
- 3.15 Paris. Alexis Sayle sports with 1920s bohemia. Suicide is all the rage, and Valerie is determined to break the record (S) (57487). To 3.45am.

## Radio

- Radio 1  
(87.5-91.9MHz)
- 7.00am Kevin Greening 10.00 Dave Pearce 12.30 Danny Baker 2.30 Jo Whiley 5.00 John Peel 7.00 Lovegrove Dance Party with Danny Farnham 8.00 Radio 1 Rap Show from the Met. Verdi-Falstaff. Paul Pishika (bass), Paul Rogers (tenor), Chorus and Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera/James Levine. Act 1, (7.05-7.30 interval). Father Owen Lee considers the achievement of Verdi's *La Traviata*. Act 2, (8.15-8.45) *The Met Opera Quiz*. Act 3.
- 9.00 Building a Library. Jan Smaczny compares recordings of Smetana's *Ma Vlast*.
- 10.15 Record Release. Handel: Giulio Cesare. Handel: Israel in Egypt.
- 11.15 Resonance. Stephen Johnson explores another batch of releases on the Philips Duo label.
- 12.00 Private Passions. Sir Isiah Berlin reveals his musical predilections. See Choice.
- 1.00 News; Private View. Nicholas Ward-Jackson meets Douglas Gordon. (1.41) See Choice.
- 1.25 Youth Orchestra of the World. Wigan Youth Jazz Orchestra, conducted by Ian Darrington.
- 2.25 Refractions. A recital of concert pieces by composers who also wrote music for the movies. Sophie Langdon (violin), Nigel Hill (piano), Miklos Rozsa: Hungarian Peasant Songs and Dances. Golszki: Six Scenes from "La Strada". Honnegger: Violin Sonata No. 2. Korngold: Suite: Much Ado about Nothing.
- 3.25 Ulster Orchestra. Conductor Jakub Kaszyski. Wagner: Siegfried's Rhine Journey. Glazunov: Symphonie Concerto in E flat. Bruckner, ed. Novak: Symphony No. 3 in D minor.
- 5.00 Jazz Record Requests.



## Choice

Sir Isiah Berlin reveals his Private Passions (12noon R3). Nicholas Ward-Jackson offers a riveting Private View (1pm R3) of the bizarre extremes of modern artists like Douglas Gordon (left); while the under-the-poker Thomas Lynch goes public in Stazza on Stage (10.15pm R4).

- 5.45 Music Matters. Ivan Hewett lists in on the celebration of American music taking place in Scotland and talks to John McEldown about the authentic Broadway sound of the Thelma Houston. 6.30 Live from the Met. Verdi-Falstaff. Paul Pishika (bass), Paul Rogers (tenor), Chorus and Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera/James Levine. Act 1, (7.05-7.30 interval). Father Owen Lee considers the achievement of Verdi's *La Traviata*. Act 2, (8.15-8.45) *The Met Opera Quiz*. Act 3.
- 9.00 Blue Skies. Steve Jones explores the world of robots.
- 10.10 Night Thoughts. Clive Williamson (piano). Copland: Night Thoughts. Carter: Night Fantasies.
- 10.45 Impressions. Brian Morton introduces a totally improvised session by Vanessa Madrox (voice), John Butcher (saxophone) and Phil Durrant (violin).
- 12.30-1.00am The Hi-De-Ho Man. Alyn Shipton talks to trumpeter Jonah Jones about his time in Cab Calloway's swing orchestra. (5.6).
- 5.55 Open University. Turning the International Airline Business. 6.15 Literature and Ideology. 6.35 Re-viewing the Family.

- Radio 4  
(92.4-94.9MHz)
- 9.00am News Briefing. 6.00am News Briefing. 6.10 Farming Today. 6.50 Prayer for the Day. 6.55 Weather. 7.00 Today. 8.55 Weather. 9.00 News. 9.05 Sport on 4. 9.30 Breakaway. 10.00 News; Loose Ends. 11.00 News; The Week in Westminster. 11.30 From Our Own Correspondent. 12.00 Money Box. 12.25 Just a Minute.

- George Shearing talks to June Knox-Mawer about his life. 11.30 The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy. By Douglas Adams. With Peter Jones, Simon Jones, Geoffrey McGivern and Mark Wing-Devey. 12.00 News. 12.30 The Late Story: Report on an Undiscovered Space Station by JG Ballard. 12.48 Shipping Forecast. 1.00am As World Service.

- Radio 5  
(153.1-155.1MHz)
- 6.05am Dirty Talk 6.30 Brian Hayes at Breakfast 9.05 Weekend with Kershaw and Whitaker. 11.05 Top Gear 11.35 Crime Desk 12.00 Midday Edition 12.15 Sportsall 1.00 Sport on Five 8.05 Six-O-Six 3.35 Straight Up 8.05 The Box 8.35 Dailyn on Saturday 10.05 The Treatment 11.00 Night Extra 12.05 After Hours 2.05 Up All Night 5.00-6.05am Morning Reports

- Classic FM  
(101.8-103.9MHz)
- 6.00am Sarah Lucas 9.00 Classic Countdown 12.00 Classic Gardening Forum. From the Monk Sherborne Horticultural Society. 1.00 Alan Mann 3.00 The Saturday Alternative 6.00 Classic America 7.00 The World Opera Season. Handel: Giulio Cesare. With Michael Chance, Dorothea Roschmann, Dawn Kotoski, Kammerchor Cantamus Halle, Freiburg Baroque Orchestra/Nicholas McGegan. 10.00 Classic Quiz 12.00 Andrea Leon 4.00 Classic Countdown 5.00-6.00am Michael Fantone

- Virgin Radio  
(101.8-103.9MHz)
- 6.00am Janey Lee Grace 8.00 Russ & Jon's Greatest Hits 10.00 Richard Skinner 2.00 Mark Forrest 6.00 Mitch Johnson 10.00 Robin Banks 2.00-6.00am House of Pank

- World Service  
(153.1-155.1MHz)
- 1.00am World News 1.10 Press Review 1.15 The Traditions of the Prophet 1.30 From Our Own Correspondent 1.50 Write On 2.00 Newsday 2.30 The Ed Stewart Show 3.00 World News 3.15 Sports Roundup 3.30 Fourth Estate 4.00pm The Undercover Man (1949) (30788088). 5.35 Doctor Doolittle (1967) (21313048). 8.00 Starman (1984). Sci-fi romance starring Jeff Bridges and Karen Allen (1991).

## Satellite

- SKY ONE  
(7.00am-11.00pm)
- 7.00am Undun (451796). 10.00 Ghou-Lashed (5108628). 11.45 The Perfect Party (288254). 12.00 WWF (99222). 1.00 The Hit Mix (62870). 2.00 Tech (9222). 2.30 Family Ties (1086). 3.00 One West Walkin' (12609). 4.00 Kung Fu, the Legend Continues (91116). 5.00 Mysterious Island (96269). 6.00 WWF (95406). 7.00 Sliders (36777). 8.00 Unsolved Mysteries (45425). 9.00 Cops (20628). 9.30 Schindler (51845). 11.00 The Movie Show (92845). 11.30 Forever Knight (89551). 12.30 WWF (99222). 1.00 Saturday Night Live (760298).

- SKY MOVIES  
(6.00am-11.00pm)
- 6.00am The Big Parade of Comedy (1964) (73628). 8.00 Kiss Me Kate (1953) (77609). 10.00 Red Line 7000 (1965) (2023). 12.00 Sleepless in Seattle (1993) (50530). 3.00 Clarence, the Cross-eyed Lion (1955) (517203). 3.45 Dragonheart (1993) (931154). 5.20 Call of the Wild (1993) (5406357). 7.00 Sleepless in Seattle (1993). Romantic drama starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan (78947). 9.00 Murder One. Courtroom drama (50357). 10.00 Dead-bolt (1972). Thriller starring Justice Bellman, Adam Baldwin and Chris Mulkey (665338). 11.35 Return to Two Moon Junction (1993). Adult drama (51425). 1.15 The Adventures of Ford Fairlane (1990) (206182). 2.55-6.00am The New Age (1994) (7783097).

- MOVIE CHANNEL  
(6.00am-11.00pm)
- 6.00am High Heat (1958) (64970). 8.00 Robocop: The Movie (1993) (68951). 10.00 Submarine Command (1951) (69645). 12.00 Son of Laskar (1949) (68674). 2.00 Duncan's World (40970). 4.00 Kid in the Wood (1991) (5883). 6.00 Curse of the Crystal Eye (1993). Children's adventure starring James Parker and Cynthia Rhodes (37406). 8.00 Greedy (1994). Farce starring Michael J Fox, Kim Douglas and Nancy Travis (29511). 10.00 Carlin's Way (1993). Gangster drama starring Al Pacino and Sean Penn (49387171). 12.25 Live Wire (1967) (21313048). 1.15 Barbarella at the Gate (1993) (851497). 3.45-6.00am Curse of the Crystal Eye (1993) (1772939).

- SKY SPORTS  
(7.00am-11.00pm)
- 7.00am Soccer AM (5990208). 11.00 World Wrestling Federation Raw (330483). 12.00 American Sports Saturday (9221672). 1.00 Snooker. Welsh Open (678628). 4.30 The Coca-Cola World Sport Special (607357). 5.00 Gillette World Sport (532377). 8.00 Ford Scania Golf USA (2967222). 11.00-1.00am The Heineken Classics (3588425).

- 10.00 Memphis Belle (1990). Second World War drama based on the real-life exploits of an American B-17 bomber and its crew. Stars Matthew Modine, Eric Stoltz and Billy Zane (19413). 11.55 Darling (1965). Drama starring Dirk Bogarde and Julie Christie. A young model decides to further her career via the bedroom and ends up finding love with a member of the Italian gentry (40215135). 2.00-3.25am Bananas (1971) (5871810).

- UN GOLD  
(7.00am-11.00pm)
- 7.00am Give Us a Cue (4667593). 7.25 Gong for Gold (4686628). 7.50 Pink Panther (724116). 8.00 Warhol (64661). 9.00 Secret Army (3071883). 10.00 Neighbours (4561203). 12.00 Film: Watership Down (2967135). 1.45 Bless This House (3152080). 2.15 EastEnders (8392319). 5.00 Tilt Death Us Do Part (9553357). 5.35 Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin (779609). 6.10 French Fields (1316425). 6.40 It Ain't Half Hot, Mum (9743338). 7.15 The Upright Circle (296357). 7.45 Bread (8094116). 8.25 The Bill Originals (70699406). 9.30 Count Dracula (6879609). 11.10 Film: Best Shot (2843222). 1.15 The Lenny Henry Show (438346). 1.55-7.00am Shopping (93381758).

- SKY SPORTS 2  
(7.00am-11.00pm)
- 7.00am Soccer AM (5990208). 11.00 World Wrestling Federation Raw (330483). 12.00 American Sports Saturday (9221672). 1.00 Snooker. Welsh Open (678628). 4.30 The Coca-Cola World Sport Special (607357). 5.00 Gillette World Sport (532377). 8.00 Ford Scania Golf USA (2967222). 11.00-1.00am The Heineken Classics (3588425).

- UNITE  
(9.00am-11.00pm)
- 9.00am AM Live 10.00 The Fashion Show 11.00 Video Box 1.00 The Week in Review 2.00 Sports Live 6.00 The Buzzer 8.00 Showbiz 9.00 The Fashion Show 9.30 Video Box 10.00 Stand-Up Live 11.00 The Sex Show 12.00 Stand-Up Live 12.30 The Sex Show 1.00, 6.00am Night Hours

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## comment

### Cold comfort for future generations

Is Greenpeace backing the best option for safer fridges?  
Nicholas Schoon reports

The household fridge sits peacefully in a corner of your kitchen, humming quietly in its ceaseless battle against putrefaction. But in Germany, this most ubiquitous of white goods has been subjected to a political onslaught. Greenpeace has run a highly successful campaign to change the type of refrigerant used in fridges, and it is trying to do the same in Britain.

Yesterday John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, made a rare joint appearance with Lord Peter Melchett, director of Greenpeace UK. They were opening a new production line that will churn out 10,000 drink-chilling cabinets a year for use in pubs and clubs. The Elstar factory in Castle Donington, Derbyshire, has shunned the products offered by chemical giants like ICI and Du Pont and decided to switch to hydrocarbons, a "green" refrigerant fluid.

Greenpeace is thrilled and hopes the five companies that manufacture more than two million household fridges and freezers in Britain each year can be pressured into following suit. This campaign arises out of the decision of most nations to phase out CFCs, the industrial gases that have been destroying the ozone layer. Their biggest use is in refrigerators and air-conditioners. For just over a year they have been banned altogether. It fell to the chemical multinationals that made CFCs to develop substitutes rapidly, and put them into production. That cost billions of pounds, but they figured it was money well spent if it provided them with the huge, assured market they had enjoyed with CFCs.

But environmentalists, and especially Greenpeace, attacked the substitutes they developed. One such is HCFCs, which also destroy ozone, albeit much less drastically than CFCs. These, too, will be banned in the developed world by 2030. The industry's main hope therefore is HFCs, which leave ozone untouched but are extremely powerful "greenhouse" gases. Greenpeace decided to promote another much simpler substitute, hydrocarbons. These do no harm to the ozone layer, and while they are greenhouse gases, they are much weaker than HFCs.

Four years ago the environmental group decided to back technologists from the former East Germany who were working on hydrocarbon fridges, and a factory there that was still functioning, although teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. Greenpeace's campaigning has now persuaded every company selling household fridges in Germany, Europe's biggest market, to offer products containing hydrocarbon refrigerant.

There, hydrocarbon fridges are marketed as the environmentally responsible product, and make up about half of all sales. They are also selling well in Austria and Switzerland. The only British company manufacturing them is Electrolux, which exports its whole output – mainly to Germany!

HCFCs are clearly undesirable – they are, after all, being phased out under the international ozone treaty. But are hydrocarbons so good, and HFCs so bad? The former only have a really strong claim to be ecologically superior if the refrigerants are leaking out into the air, where they can do their bit towards global warming. Certainly, the refrigeration systems used in supermarkets and other commercial premises leak their refrigerant fluid – about a quarter of it a year trickles out and has to be topped up. That is where the bulk of CFC sales have gone in the past, and where most HFCs are going now.

But there is a huge reluctance to switch over to hydrocarbons in these big, leaky systems with their long lengths of pipes, because these chemicals, unlike HFCs, are highly flammable. Any leakage and there is a danger of explosion. At the other end of the market, in the little fridges used in homes, small shops and pubs, the refrigerant is hermetically sealed for its entire life, so there is very little danger of leakage. Provided the HFCs are destroyed or recycled when the fridge is scrapped, they make no contribution to global warming.

Thus while Greenpeace's successful campaign to persuade an industry to change basic technology is impressive, it seems unlikely to achieve any great environmental gain. In any case, when it comes to buying fridges, the British consumer shows little of that earnest German ecological consciousness. Talk to anyone in the business and they will tell you: what counts in the showroom is price, price and price.

### PROFILE: the Loch Ness monster

Nessie is emerging again in a new film – and boosting Scotland's economy, says Jonathan Glancey

Tonight, as murky Highland mists roll over the inky waters of nearby Loch Ness, a select Hollywood gathering will attend the premiere of *Loch Ness* in the old Inverness Scala. The film (brought to you by the makers of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and starring Ted Danson, Ian Holm and Joely Richardson) has its London premiere next Friday.

Between now and then, expect Nessie herself (himself?) to take a bow. For the tourist-baiting Loch Ness monster has never been one to let a timely photo-opportunity pass her by.

Sceptics – as prolific as the monster is rare – believe that Nessie is nothing more than a prop in the wardrobe department of local tourist boards. Their case is a strong one – following hard on the heels of the Hollywood productions *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*, *Loch Ness* is expected to spur on a vigorous new American tourist invasion of the Scottish Highlands.

Half a million visitors a year come to Loch Ness in the hope of catching a glimpse of Nessie. Of these, 300,000 visit the official Loch Ness monster museum at Drumadroit, a village on the edge of the loch. They have made Ronnie Bremner, the museum's owner, a multi-millionaire. Between them they spend £25m a year in the vicinity of the loch, yet the only monsters they see are the cuddly ones bought from Bremner's souvenir stall.

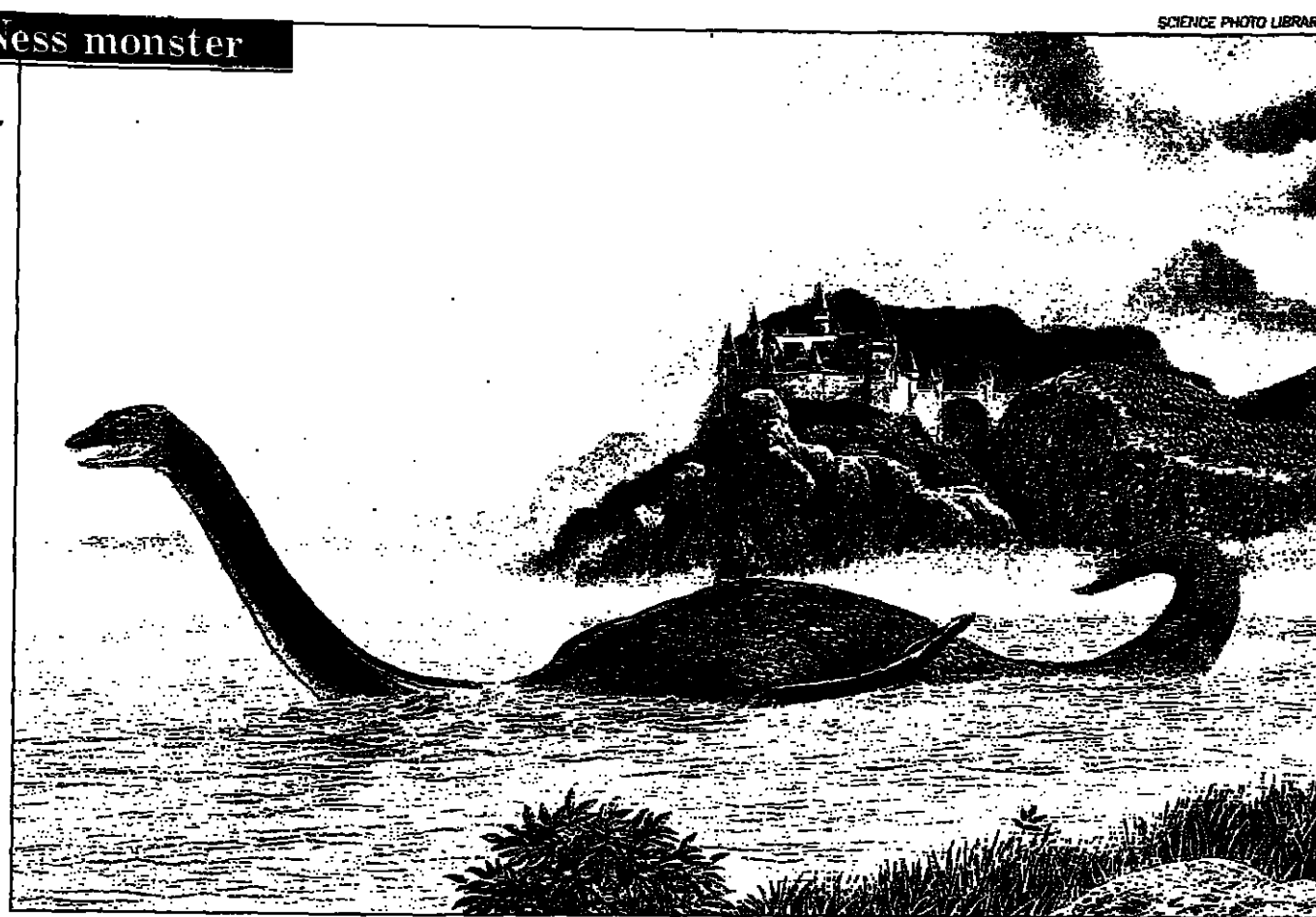
The first 20th-century sighting of the monster was by Mr and Mrs John Mackay, proprietors of the Drumadroit Hotel, in 1933. The *Inverness Courier* snapped up the story (the beastie was dubbed the Loch Ness monster by Dr Evan Barron, that paper's editor), which in turn led to an invasion by hordes from *Fleet Street's Daily Beasts and Daily Bruces*. By now, it was all but impossible to book a room in the Drumadroit Hotel.

On 19 April 1934, Lt Col Robert Wilson, a Harley Street gynaecologist, caught the monster on camera. The "surgeon's photograph" was a worldwide sensation, and, until exposed as a fake 60 years later, remained the most convincing evidence anyone had of Nessie's existence.

Lt Col Wilson had in fact taken part in a hoax organised by Marmaduke Arundel Wetherell, actor and adventurer. The serpentine head and neck rearing up from the loch's deep and peaty waters were nothing more than a toy submarine in heavy disguise. Wetherell's stepson, Christopher, eventually revealed the hoax on his deathbed, aged 90, in November 1993.

For the monster's millions of fans, this was a setback – but little more than that. After all, which Christian has ceased to believe in the *Saviour* since the *Turin Shroud* was shown to be a brilliant thirteenth-century fake?

In any case, although the monster is supposed to be a plesiosaur (a marine dinosaur, presumed extinct 70 million years ago), no one is quite sure. Over the past five years, Nessie has been described as an alien sent to observe life on Earth, a ghost capable of transforming itself into solid matter, a



## Our best-loved monster of the deep

giant frog, a loch-locked whale and the mother of all sturgeons.

It does seem odd that when the Hubble Space Telescope can spot galaxies billions of light years from our own, Nessie remains as elusive as ever. As elusive, in fact, as Big Foot (or Sasquatch), the Abominable Snowman (Yeti) and the Beast of Bodmin; as hidden as sibling marine monsters such as Morag, the beast of Loch Morar, the Lambton

And it's not just tourists who are eternally intrigued by Nessie's possibilities. Shortly before Christmas, Triton International, a firm of North Sea boffins, launched its "Nessie-detecting sonar system" at the Offshore Europe Oil Exhibition in Aberdeen. Earlier last year the veteran underwater explorer Alan Whitfield recorded previously unheard "grunts and groans" of a creature that could only be Nessie. While most serious biomarine

caught in a net instead of on blurry celluloid and out-of-focus videotape. In 1993, the American *Sun* newspaper ran a spoof story, with photographs, of how Nessie had been caught. As Americans are the monster's most voracious fans, the *Sun* knew it would have a captive audience that day.

Did the same goal motivate the editor of *Popolo d'Italia* in 1941? The Fascist daily told of how brave Italian pilots had flown over Loch Ness and blown the monster into a tangle of spaghetti. An Italian bomber over Scotland? That was surely a bigger hoax than the surgeon's photograph of 1934. In Germany, Josef Goebbels had already taken a pot-shot at Nessie in an article he signed for *Hamburger Illustrierte* in 1940; any nation, thundered the Minister for Propaganda, that believed in such trash was clearly monstrously stupid and thus incapable of winning the war.

Today, in the international war for tourists' attention, the Stirling and Trossachs region is doing very nicely, according to Alastair McPherson of the Scottish Tourist Board. *Rob Roy* and *Braveheart* produced a boom and, he believes, *Loch Ness* may treble the number of visitors this year to 1.5 million, boosting revenue to a healthy £350m. The tourist industry in Scotland employs 180,000 people.

So here's a toast from the banks, braes and ringing hills of bonny Loch Ness: to Hollywood. And thanks, of course, to Nessie, a solitary, 70-million-year-old monster, for playing her supporting role so well and keeping her monstrous head down until needed.

Our need for monsters is deeply rooted. It would be a sad day if Nessie were ever caught

Worm, the watery Welsh dragon that hides away in Lake Vyrnwy, and the slobbering Beast of Bosover.

There are records of monsters lurking in Scottish lochs dating back to the country's conversion to Christianity. Nessie's first appearance seems to have been 565AD, when she set upon St Columba and his holy band. After this episode, sightings were few and far between until the 20th century.

According to the BBC reporter Nicholas Witchell, author of *The Loch Ness Story* and one of the monster's most insistent fans, this paucity of sightings reflects the fact that before the arrival of the A82 tourist road skirting the east coast of the lake in 1933, Loch Ness was extremely remote.

expeditions today study Loch Ness because it is inherently fascinating, it is still the case that funding can be better obtained by riding on the back of the monster myth.

Nevertheless, the famously deep (possibly 1,000ft in places) and dark waters of Loch Ness (the most powerful submarine lamps enable the human eye to see 15ft into the gloom) may well hold undiscovered secrets. Even a prehistoric monster.

Our need for monsters seems to be deeply rooted. The British Isles have few, if any, large or fierce animals: the last wolf was shot in the Highlands in 1743. Nessie fills a gap. And with monster myths, we can feed our desire for mystery. It would be a sad day for many of us if Nessie were ever

## Can DNA convict a 16-year-old corpse?

Doubts surround the methods being used to solve the 'Bible John' murders, reports Mary Braid



The remains of John Irvine McInnes were dug up this week – 16 years after his death and 26 years after a series of gruesome murders which terrorised Scotland and still haunt it.

As his grave was defiled – in the full glare of the media – detectives revealed he might be "Bible John", the killer of three women and a dancehall regular with a fondness for the scriptures. Strathclyde police, like many other forces, are placing their faith in DNA testing to solve an intractable case. But as the coffin was lifted out by six officers, we may have been witnessing something altogether more grotesque. For it is entirely possible that the whole macabre exercise – painful for relatives of the suspect and painful alike – is a waste of time, and that, not for the first time, the belief in DNA profiling, forensic science's greatest breakthrough since fingerprinting was perfected in 1901, is entirely misplaced. While no-one disputes that genetic profiling is a wonderfully powerful tool, it is becoming evident that it is a far more limited technology than was originally suggested. Its capabilities have been overplayed to such an extent that a major miscarriage of justice may now be waiting to happen.

Scottish forensic scientists hope to match DNA from Mr McInnes's remains with a semen stain left on a pair of nylon tights belonging to Helen Puttock, the last victim. In leaning so heavily on the new forensic science, they are following the lead of the Government. Last year, the Home Office, despite concerns over the readiness of the technology and civil liberties implications, opened a national DNA database.

Recently, more than 2000 men were DNA-tested following the killing of Cardiff teenager Claire Wood, and police seeking the killer of French hitchhiker Coline Figeard are currently working their way through the DNA samples of 1200 British lorry drivers. More bizarrely, DNA testing has been threatened in a Scottish court battle over the ownership of a Burmese cat

and deployed by Brazilian scientists trying to prove that 70-year-old bones are those of British explorer Col Percy Fawcett.

Yesterday, Dr Wilson Wall, a DNA specialist geneticist, questioned the exhuming of John McInnes's remains. After 16 years, he said, it was unlikely that enough quality DNA had survived to allow a viable match to be made. Any new evidence was unlikely to constitute anything near proof. Such assessments reinforce doubts about Thursday's grave visit. If, in fact any alleged evidence did emerge, where would it be challenged?

The fact is that despite its common label of "genetic fingerprinting", DNA profiling or testing enjoys none of fingerprinting's certainties. Its scientific base is far more complex, making its findings harder to explain in court where juries can be falsely convinced of its strength.

The double helix structure of Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) was discovered in Cambridge in 1952. It is a chemical found in chromosomes in all body cells and carries the coded instructions, or genes, that lay down an individual's genetic blueprint. With the exception of identical twins, no two people have the same DNA or genetic code in their cells. In 1984, Professor Alec Jeffreys, a Leicester University geneticist, released its crime solving potential when he discovered among the billions of bits which make up the DNA chain those that distinguished between individuals.

Because of the unique nature of our DNA, the term genetic fingerprinting was quickly adopted for the profiling technique. But while the new crime detection device is far more versatile than fingerprinting – a sample can be obtained from hair, semen, blood, bones or any other part of the body, it is far less clear-cut. If two sets of fingerprints match, they were made by the same person. You may argue about how your prints came to be at the scene of a crime, but you cannot argue that they are yours. However, profiling rests on the probability of an exact

match. It is simply not possible to analyse someone's entire DNA double helix which would yield exact identification. Instead, forensic scientists have to sample segments which they hope would be characteristic of an individual. Analysing a part rather than the whole, there is always a chance that two samples will be wrongly linked. No wonder civil liberties groups have warned against blind reliance on testing.

While the last decade has brought refinements to early profiling techniques, with that has emerged more evidence to undermine it. Laboratory procedures used to prepare profiles have been found lacking and the statistical techniques used to determine the probability that two samples are a perfect match have been challenged. Concerns about laboratory preparation emerged as early as 1987 when Californian police set out to test the system by sending samples to various testing companies to identify matches. Cellmark (a division of ICI) came up with with seven false positives and even when the tests were repeated under the supervision of a second technician, a false positive was still recorded. This time, the company blamed cross-contamination between samples rather than mis-handling in the lab, which was the earlier excuse.

The irony is that in practice, DNA testing is more decisive in ruling out suspects rather than pointing the finger at them. It is often forgotten that the world's first mass DNA screening by Leicestershire police into the murders of Lynda Mann and Dawn Ashworth in 1987 firstly ruled out a man who had confessed to the killing. The police – aided by DNA testing – then went on to find the real killer.

So as the police examine what is left of John McInnes, they would be advised to bear in mind the limitations of the technique they are relying on. Even if they believe they have found Bible John, what independent court of law can assess their judgement? Can justice be done to a dead man's DNA?

### WALK THE PROPOSED NEWBURY BYPASS ON SUNDAY 11TH FEBRUARY

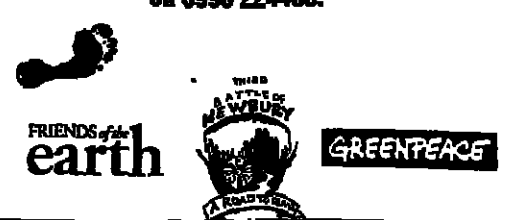
...and see for yourself the destruction that will be wreaked upon some of Britain's most splendid woodland, heath and water meadow if this wanton desecration of our countryside is allowed to proceed.

Make clear your objection to this loss.

Walkers should meet at Newbury rail station at 12 noon, where a free shuttle service will take you to the start of the walk. This will start at 1pm and finish by 4.30pm.

This peaceful walk is suitable for all ages.

If you are not arriving by train please use the public car parks in Newbury and pick up the shuttle buses from the station. For details of coaches to Newbury, please phone the information hotline on 0990 224488.



CUT TRAFFIC NOT TREES



6411015



# s Child

## Figure of Jesus

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**Fighting back:** Tough new Cruickshank proposals 'could costs thousands of jobs and frighten investors away from Britain'

## Watchdog's plan could halve profit, BT warns

MARY FAGAN  
Industrial Correspondent

BT warned its profits could be halved and that many thousands of jobs would be lost under tough new pricing proposals by the telecoms watchdog, Don Cruickshank.

Launching its offensive against the regulator, BT called for a staged end to pricing controls as competition becomes more established, beginning next year with caps on national calls.

Unless BT and Mr Cruickshank can agree on pricing changes, the company will be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Peter McCarthy Ward, BT's project director on price controls, said: "The old approach to setting prices may be losing its validity."

"The next price control will last until 2001 or 2002. That is a long period, encompassing a great deal of change."

Under Mr Cruickshank's proposals, BT's rate of return would be cut to between 9 and 13 from around 19 per cent at present.

The company alleges that it faces increased risk in a rapidly changing marketplace and

that any reduction is wholly unjustified.

BT also warns that the clamp-down would force it to cut back on investment and that other companies, whose pricing is set to compete with BT, may be forced to follow suit.

John Butler, BT's director for regulatory affairs, added: "It is not going to be good news for jobs - not just for BT but across the industry."

He warned that a deterioration in Britain's telecommunications sector would also prompt potential investors in this and other industries to channel their money elsewhere.

Mr Butler said: "It is not just brave entrepreneurs but major companies such as AT&T of the US that are tilling their lances against us."

"I find it very hard to come up with a case that says our risk is diminishing."

The onslaught of cable companies and newcomers, including Energis and Ionica, meant that BT could be no longer considered a low-risk utility.

Mr Butler also pointed to the opening up of the European market and the speed of technological change in the marketplace as adding to the uncertainties in the industry.

Under the present regime, which ends next year, BT must keep overall price changes on a range of basic services to inflation minus 7.5 percentage points.

Mr Cruickshank's office, OfTel, is consulting on what should follow. But it has made it clear that it will assume a much lower cost of capital and rate of return in deciding the new scheme.

Mr Cruickshank has also said he expects BT to show marked improvements in efficiency, but the company, which has shed 100,000 jobs in recent years, argues that there is a limit to how much it can do.

BT wants not only a higher cost of capital but a strict timetable under which services should be released from any cap.

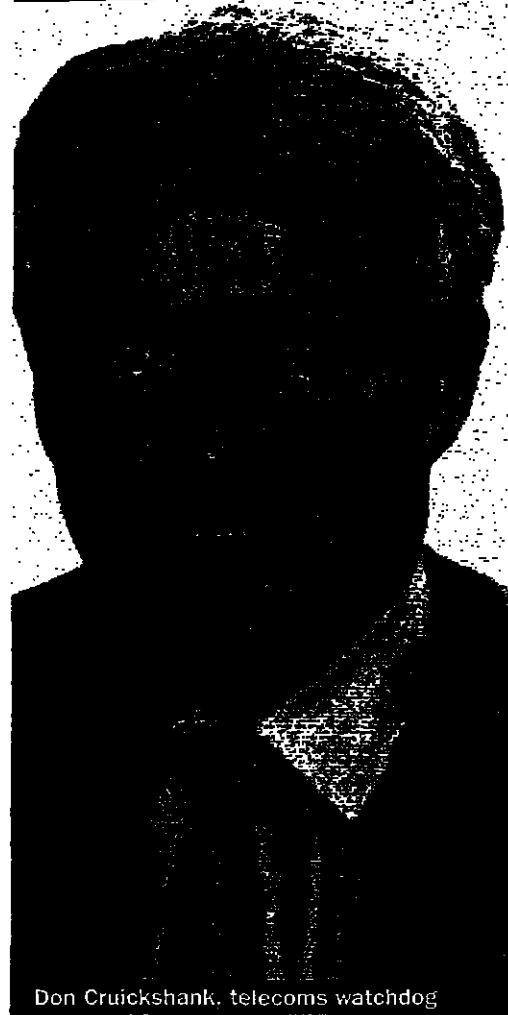
## British Telecom versus the regulator

### What OfTel is demanding

1. Rate of return on capital to be reduced to between 8 per cent and 10 per cent. At present, BT's prices are capped at a level which assumes a 15 per cent return, so the proposal would certainly mean more onerous pricing controls.
2. New catch all fair trading powers enabling the regulator to act swiftly against any alleged abuse of monopoly power by BT. No right of appeal except through the courts.
3. That BT give competitors adequate notice of new services and products enabling them to respond accordingly.
4. Present regulatory safeguards to remain in place until competition sufficiently well developed to allow a gradual rolling back of price controls and other constraints.

### What BT says about it

1. Rate of return assumption, far from being cut, should be raised to 18 per cent to take account of increased risks in the marketplace. Lower rates of return could encourage inadequate spending on telecoms infrastructure.
2. That OfTel's powers in this field be properly defined and limited. There should also be an adequate appeals procedure before OfTel is allowed to act with the ultimate arbiter remaining the MMC.
3. Has OfTel gone mad? In no other industry would any player be obliged to give notice of new products. It removes all incentive to produce any.
4. There should be a detailed timetable to release each service from price controls with sunset clauses ending by 2001. BT to be allowed to send entertainment product across its lines from 1997 onwards.



Don Cruickshank, telecoms watchdog



Iain Vallance, BT Chairman

which ends next year, BT must keep overall price changes on a range of basic services to inflation minus 7.5 percentage points.

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From 1997 onwards, it says that private circuits and national calls should be freed from controls, followed a year later by international calls.

By "the millennium" local calls, line rentals and connections should be released, leaving controls only on charges levied by BT on rival operators for using its wires to complete their customers' calls.

The company's initial response to the regulator was delivered yesterday and no final decision is likely until the middle of the year.

Separately, BT also responded to Mr Cruickshank's plan to take on a "sweeping" new anti-competitive power. This would replace a myriad of powers against specific types of behaviour and would allow Mr

Cruickshank to act much more rapidly where he sees fit. BT says it recognises the need for change but that OfTel's proposals give Mr Cruickshank too much power.

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## Spindler 'finally ousted' from Apple

DAVID USBORNE  
New York

The long-anticipated ousting of Michael Spindler as chief executive of Apple Computer appeared to have become reality yesterday, with several reports naming Gilbert Amelio of National Semiconductors Corp as his replacement.

National Semiconductors confirmed yesterday that Mr Amelio, widely respected as a master of corporate turnarounds, had tendered his resignation on Thursday and was moving to another company but would not identify it.

Apple was making no comment on reports that appeared in several US newspapers that both Mr Spindler and the chairman of the company, Mike Markkula, had been jettisoned during an emergency meeting of the company's board in New York on Wednesday.

The news appeared to muddy expectations of a buyout of Apple by Sun Microsystems, which has been engaged in on-off negotiations with the company since last September. Some sources suggested that the board's actions indicated that a sale to Sun Microsystems was no longer imminent.

Mr Spindler, who suffers from high blood pressure, has been blamed for the sudden decline in Apple's fortunes, which included the usually profitable Christmas retail season.

The first-quarter loss was the last straw in several months of bad news for Apple, which has seen its market share squeezed by the domination of the so-called Intel computer standard, based on the Windows operating system of Microsoft and the chip technology of Intel Corp. Earlier this week, Apple's debt rating was cut to junk-bond status.

The height of concern among investors was underlined yesterday by James Cramer, president of Cramer & Co and

owner of 321,000 Apple shares. He said he did not care now if Apple reached a merger deal with Sun Microsystems. "Just having Spindler out is worth a few bucks to me," he said.

While confirming Mr Amelio's resignation, National Semiconductors said it could offer no further information. "We have no announcement we can make," a spokeswoman said. "If there is another party involved, it's got to be their call."

The news of Mr Spindler's demise buoyed Apple shares in the Nasdaq in New York in morning trading yesterday, pushing them 62.5 cents higher to \$29 by midday.

The price of gold fell back on profit taking in the afternoon fix to \$414.50.

This view from the currency markets finds little favour by those who follow the commodity markets. According to Mr Smith, the price surge has come from "only semi-serious money - big as far as the gold market is concerned but a drop in the ocean compared with the weight of investible funds."

Mr Smith argued that the price rise was likely to prove short-lived.

The price of gold fell back on profit taking in the afternoon fix to \$414.50.



Michael Spindler: Reported to be removed Photograph: AP

## Mattel calls off Hasbro merger

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Barbie was left weeping at the altar yesterday after her glittering \$5.2bn marriage to Action Man was called off.

Mattel, the US toy giant which owns Barbie, said it was withdrawing its \$5.2bn (£3.4bn) offer for Hasbro, progenitor of Action Man and number two in the US toy market, blaming the "intolerable climate" created by its intended public tantrums following the announcement of its bid last week. The merger would have created the world's largest toy company with sales of over \$7bn a year.

In a letter to Alan Hassenfeld, the Hasbro chairman, his opposite number at Mattel, John Amerman, vented his spleen at being spurned. Mr Amerman said Hasbro had "elected to take drastic steps, both politically and through the media, to greatly increase the difficulty of achieving a merger in a timely manner."

He went on: "Unfortunately, your 'scorched earth' campaign has created an intolerable climate."

The end of what was billed as toytown's marriage of the century sent Hasbro's shares tumbling in New York and left Mattel wondering how it could redeem itself. Immediately after the announcement but before the market opened, the shares plunged \$8.75 to \$32 - well below Mattel's offer at the equivalent of \$52. Dealers were shocked that Mattel could have changed its affections so suddenly. "I guess they felt they weren't up to getting in a protracted mess," said one. Although he believed Hasbro would not be under particular pressure from its shareholders, he said it was not clear what would happen now.

But another was less sanguine, pointing out that Hasbro has not been aggressively managed and needed to take steps to appease shareholders. "It's incumbent on Hasbro to push their stock up," the dealer said.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Lawrence Summers, US Deputy Treasury Secretary, said that

An unexpected sharp fall in employment in January raised fears that the US economy is slipping into recession. As a result, economists expect further cuts in interest rates following this week's quarter point reduction by the US Federal Reserve to 5.25 per cent.

Non-farm payrolls, which had been expected to rise by about 50,000, instead dropped by 201,000. With the exception of April last year, this was the first fall in payrolls for three years and the largest since April 1991.

The unemployment rate also rose sharply from 5.6 to 5.8 per cent, the highest since April.

## Jobs fall raises US recession fears

PAUL WALLACE

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Robert Reich, Labor Secretary, said that the blizzards had obscured the view of the economy. But economists said that the fall was too big to be ascribed simply to severe weather. It struck alarm bells about a fast-weakening economy.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Lawrence Summers, US Deputy Treasury Secretary, said that

the crucial priority for 1996 was "maintaining growth and putting in place any measures to counteract downside growth".

The significance of the jobs figure is that it provides an up-to-date indicator of the overall level of economic activity. Growth in jobs of about 100,000 a month equates to an approximately 2 per cent increase in real gross domestic product a year. In 1994, when the economy was expanding strongly, monthly jobs growth ran at almost 300,000.

Another good proxy for real

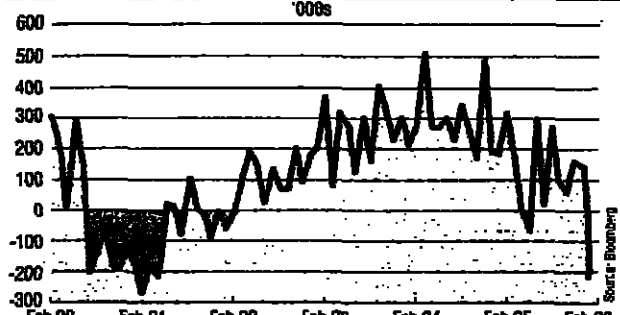
last year. However, Mr Straszheim said a recession would be avoided thanks to the easing in monetary policy started by the Fed last July. He expected the key Fed Funds rate to fall to 4.5 per cent by the middle of the year.

Three-month Eurodollar contracts reacted positively to the employment report. They are pricing in two further quarter point reductions in the Fed Funds rate by June. But the reaction of bond dealers was more muted.

They were struck by the sharp rise of 0.5 per cent in hourly earnings, which took the year-on-year rate to 3.3 per cent. Combined with the rise in the gold price, this raised concern that attempts to prop up the economy might rekindle inflation.

The setback on the employment front came hard after other developments signalling red for a slowing economy. Consumer confidence fell by 12 points to 87. The US purchasing managers' index of the health of manufacturing dropped from 46 to 44.2. Retail sales also grew by considerably less than had been expected.

### Monthly change in US employment



GDP growth is the index of hours worked. This fell sharply in January from 132.9 to 131.3, a further indicator of a flagging economy.

Donald Straszheim, chief economist at Merrill Lynch, said while the figures were affected by the severe weather, they were further evidence "the US economy is going to be pretty weak in the first half of 1995 - a slowdown, but not a stop".

The main reason for the deceleration was a continuing attempt by manufacturers to run down excess inventories built up

last year. However, Mr Straszheim said a recession would be avoided thanks to the easing in monetary policy started by the Fed last July. He expected the key Fed Funds rate to fall to 4.5 per cent by the middle of the year.

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## Nationwide sees house price hope

DIANE COYLE  
Economics Correspondent

House prices were flat in January and their annual pace of decline showed signs of levelling out. Nationwide building society said yesterday.

Britain's third-biggest mortgage lender predicted that this year will bring a revival in the housing market, despite recent figures suggesting that mortgage borrowing was weaker in December.

"There are now good grounds for thinking that 1996 will see the beginning of a sustained, albeit modest, recovery," said Philip Williamson, a Nationwide spokesman.

The society's house price index was unchanged between December and January, and last month stood at a level 0.7 per cent lower than a year earlier.

This was the best year-on-year figure since last June. In 1995 as a whole prices were 1.2 per cent down on 1994.

On Thursday Halifax building society, the biggest lender, reported that its house price index had climbed by 0.1 per cent in January, leaving house prices 1.2 per cent lower than a year earlier.

Nationwide said that there were already some positive signs of recovery in the market. In more upbeat reports from estate agents and a gradually rising trend in mortgage approvals.

Shares in Yorkshire Electricity moved up sharply amidst rumours that a bid for the company would emerge early next week, writes Mary Fagan.

Speculation centred on General Public Utilities, which is also said to have talked to Midlands Electricity with a view to a takeover. But another US firm, Houston Industries, is thought to be on the prowl.

One City analyst said that a bid for Yorkshire could come in at \$8 per share, valuing the company at just over £1.2bn. "With the share price moving as it is, time is of the essence. There is absolutely no reason to delay," he said.

Yorkshire's shares rose by 16p yesterday to £7.52 and those in Midlands edged up by 1p to £3.89. Midlands Electricity was the subject of an agreed £1.95bn offer by the generator, Power Gen, until it was referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. The MMC, which is also investigating a proposed takeover of Southern Electric by National Power, has until 22 March to submit its report to the Government.

A few weeks ago there was also a suggestion that Midlands would discuss a friendly merger with Southern Electric, the distribution company in the South of England. But Midlands said then there was no immediate prospect of an offer.

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## Gold price at six-year pinnacle

PAUL WALLACE  
Economics Editor

The price of gold soared to a six-year high yesterday, jumping by \$7 an ounce to \$416.25 at the morning fix in London. Heavy speculation by hedge funds has driven the price up by almost 30 dollars so far this year.

The 7 per cent rise in just one month has come after two years in which the gold price barely moved. But there are widely divergent explanations about what has caused the rally.

Andy Smith, precious metals analyst at UBS, said that the sudden increase in the gold price bore all the hallmarks of a speculative surge. "Gold looked a good thing to punt after two years in which it had done nothing," he said.

However, Kit Juckes, currency strategist at NatWest Markets, said that the rising gold price reflected concern about the attempt by hard currency countries to revive their economies by depreciating their exchange rates.

A further instance of that strategy came at the World Economic Forum in Davos. Hans Tietmeyer, President of the Bundesbank said on Friday that he believed the dollar could rise against the Mark.

However, Mr Juckes pointed out that despite the recovery in the dollar, investors knew that its long-term track record was one of decline. "The rise in the dollar is largely by default and it has left people looking for something that's hard."

The idea that investors are fleeing traditional hard currency for gold as a haven of value gets backing from the breakdown in the relationship between the dollar and the gold price. Usually the two are inversely related; in other words, a rise in the price of gold goes hand in hand with a fall in the value of the dollar. Since the end of last year, however, both have been rising.

This view from the currency markets finds little favour by those who follow the commodity markets. According to Mr Smith, the price surge has come from "only semi-serious money - big as far as the gold market is concerned but a drop in the ocean compared with the weight of investible funds."

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# Standard a tough target for NatWest ambitions



**COMMENT**

If the group is indeed interested in Standard Chartered, it is going to have a tough time convincing shareholders of its merits - especially at today's sky-high price

Lots of people would love to buy Schroders, one of Britain's last remaining independent investment banks. Foremost among them is ABN Amro, but like all the others, it chokes when it comes to thinking about the likely cost. Your best defence is the share price. Louis de Bievre, head of investment banking at ABN Amro, has told his opposite number at Schroders, Win Bischoff.

The same goes in double measure for Standard Chartered, which in the last few weeks has become the object of intense takeover speculation.

Once known as Britain's most accident-prone bank (show them a banana skin and Standard will slip on it, unkind souls used to say), Standard has enjoyed a new lease of life under Patrick Gillam and its share price has soared. The latest market surge, prompted by reports of an informal approach by NatWest Group, has propelled the stock deep into the frothosphere at 649p. Against a book value of around £1.7bn, today's share price carries goodwill of £4.6bn.

In the land of banking consolidation, the United States, recent deals have tended to be struck at little more than twice book value. NatWest itself sold out of its US retail operation just before Christmas at a lowish 1.4 times book.

Against these numbers, Standard is already horrifically overvalued at getting on for four times book. Furthermore, this is a

bank whose strengths in the Asia are often overstated.

It is strong in Hong Kong, but in most countries elsewhere its grip on the market place is hardly a secure one.

Having said that, Standard is one of the few foreign operators already implanted in the world's fastest-growing regions. It offers European or American banks, mired in mature, low-growth markets, immediate access to these markets.

NatWest may never have been serious in its approach to Standard. If there have been talks, they have not yet reached the stage where the Bank of England would need to be informed.

None the less, the persistence of the speculation must leave NatWest's shareholders distinctly worried. Lord Alexander and Derek Wallis are well regarded in the City where their rediscovery of tradition banking values has won them much praise.

Less impressive, however, is the number of times they appear to have been tempted by the deal, only not to deal. NatWest was cold-shouldered over Baring and Warburg; it failed to get its joint-venture with Rothschild; it got cold feet over Garimor. True, it has managed to buy a corporate finance boutique in New York, but only by paying over the odds.

If NatWest is indeed interested in Standard Chartered, it is going to have a tough time convincing shareholders of its merits - especially at today's sky-high price. Standard

may have put the banana skins behind it, but with an open cheque book to play with, NatWest is ripe for the treatment.

## Outlook for Yarrow harrowing

With yet another round of redundancies announced at Yarrow yesterday, the Clydeside yard is beginning to look distinctly anorectic. Could this be the beginning of the end for this historic yard?

Ever since the Government allowed GEC to acquire VSEL, giving Lord Weinstock two of Britain's three warship yards, unions have suspected that Yarrow's days are numbered. In theory at least, Yarrow's future is guaranteed. When it took over VSEL, GEC gave a number of assurances to the Ministry of Defence along these lines.

It is true that GEC warned, in writing, that if Yarrow failed to win a £400m order for three type-23 frigates then Yarrow's survival would be in "grave doubt".

The Government is still dithering about the orders because of the implications for Vosper Thornycroft, the rival yard. But both the GEC threat over type-23 orders and the redundancies yesterday can be read as part of the everyday lobbying whenever a defence order is up for grabs.

The key assurance GEC gave on Yarrow is more specific. Lord Weinstock wrote to the Ministry of Defence, saying, Yarrow

would be the yard used to build the first of the next generation of Royal Navy frigates, beyond the type-23, for which the company is developing the design.

But if the type-23 order can take so long to decide, there is clearly scope for even more delay in a brand-new design. The MoD said in its evidence to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission that it "did not regard the assurances as legally binding, or enforceable in the courts, but believed they had been given in good faith and would be honoured in all reasonable circumstances".

Reasonable is a many-faceted word. Not only does Yarrow need the type-23 orders to keep a workforce of any size employed, but there also needs to be a much firmer commitment to the new generation of frigates. Until that happens Yarrow employees should beware the small print of the assurances.

## One solution to the gold riddle

The gold price is surging. That usually signals fear of inflation. Yet at the same time, signs of recession are multiplying - the latest being the alarming fall in the number of jobs in the US in January. One obvious answer to this apparent riddle is that the markets are running scared of inflationary risks further down the road. They're worried that rate-cutting central bankers will overdo at-

tempts to get the developed economies of the world back on the path of steady growth.

Markets can be far-sighted, but all this seems a little silly. For a start, the gold price surge bears all the hallmarks of a speculative blip. There has, in any case, been scant relationship between the price of gold and inflation in the past few years and the present flurry seems much more likely to be a reaction to the latest round of currency turbulence. While the dollar has recovered strongly from the depths to which it plunged last spring, the prior appreciation of the yen and mark took a tremendous toll first on Japan and then on Germany.

The shine has gone off being a hard-currency country. The Bank of Japan has gone to the wire to push down the yen. Judging by Hans Tietmeyer's remarks at Davos yesterday, the German Bundesbank, too, is increasingly desperate to get the mark further down against the dollar.

The trouble is investors know the dollar has been in long-term decline as the US continues to pile up external debt. The odds are therefore that the rise in the dollar is no more than a cyclical recovery against a secular fall in value. Enter gold, the traditional store of value.

The Pavlovian reaction to a rising gold price is to worry about inflation. But on this occasion, it is probably signalling the extent of the attempt now being made in hard-currency countries to avoid sliding into a recession induced by the exchange rate madness.

## Shaking down: Shortage of orders on the Clyde and a tight electrical market take their toll on workforces GEC cuts 650 jobs at Yarrow shipyard

PETER RODGERS  
Business Editor

The Yarrow shipyard on the Clyde said yesterday it was to cut 650 jobs from May onwards because of a shortage of orders, and more redundancies are to be announced in April.

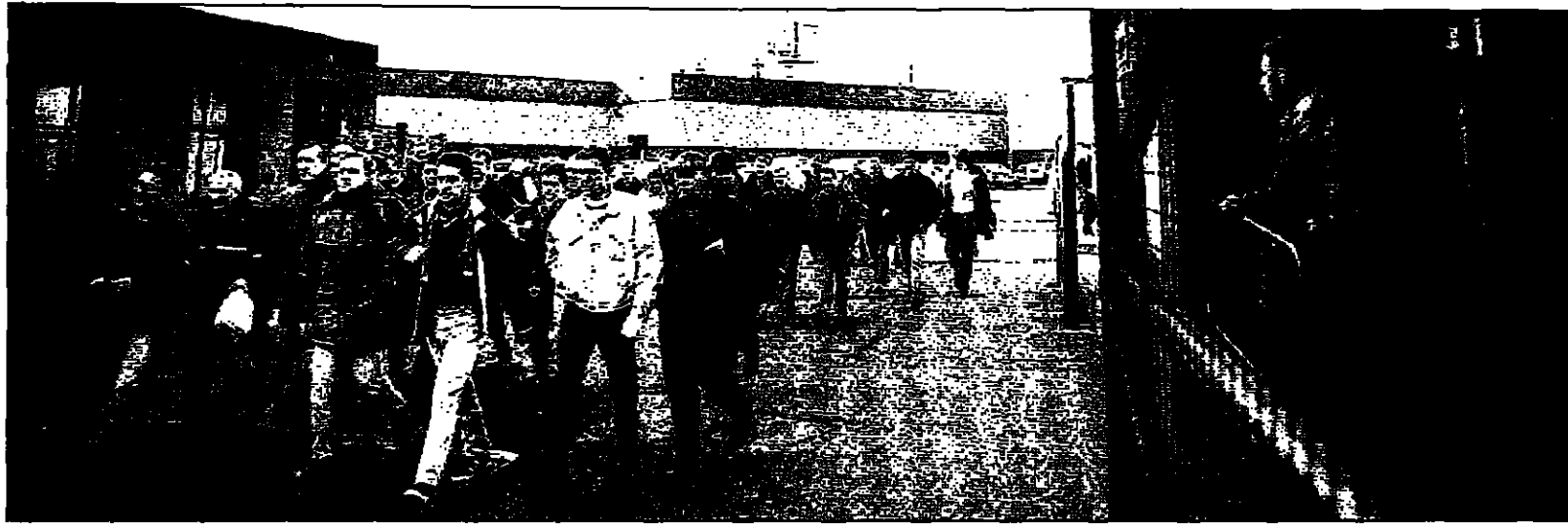
The company, owned by GEC, warned that even if it gets a £400m type-23 frigate order to be announced in the next few weeks by the Ministry of Defence, a "sizeable" number of the 650 redundancies will still go ahead.

The yard said the size of the planned second round of redundancies to be announced in April "will obviously depend on the outcome of the type-23 competition," but several hundred more jobs are thought to be at stake.

Although the workforce of 2,700 is to fall whatever happens, the announcement was also seen as part of the jockeying for the type-23 order, with Vosper Thornycroft, the Southampton shipbuilder, also in the running.

Yarrow is favourite for the order, and Vosper has issued grim statements about job losses if it fails to get the orders. Several hundred redundancies have been forecast. MPs for constituencies near each company have been lobbying hard at the Ministry of Defence.

Yarrow recently won orders for three patrol vessels for Brunel and for design of the proposed common new gener-



Long march: Workers at the Yarrow shipyard yesterday after the announcement of the redundancies beginning in May Photograph: Colin McPherson

ation frigate, which the company said "guarantees the long-term future of the yard".

It has also won subcontract work on a gas carrier and tugs

and is looking for fast ferries and other engineering work. The current workload includes three type-23 frigates, but only one remains to be launched and

the first of the others will be commissioned in March.

A union official said he was seeking talks with Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary,

for help in securing the frigate order for Yarrow.

John Reid, Labour's defence spokesman, said: "These redundancies are the direct result

of dithering and delay in the Ministry of Defence."

Mr Reid, who was outside the yard as the workforce came out, said: "It's obviously a disaster for Yarrow. Neither Yarrow nor Vosper Thornycroft can plan ahead. Neither workforce can have any security the way the Government is handling this. This is the third time they have postponed the decision on who has won the contract."

"This time around it is massive redundancies. If it is not announced within weeks, literally this month, it could mean closure. Both these firms are under intense pressure and the Government don't seem to understand either the economic or social urgency."

## Hanson closes 200 Powerhouse shops

NIGEL COPE

Hanson announced yesterday that it was closing more than 200 outlets of its Powerhouse chain of electrical shops, threatening 2,300 jobs. Hanson blamed the decision on unsatisfactory trading and a highly competitive market, which have resulted in mounting losses. Powerhouse has been losing £25m a year.

Hanson, which acquired the chain via its £2.5bn takeover of Eastern Electricity last year, said it hoped to keep 120 shops open but will close the unprofitable high street stores. Glyn Moser, Powerhouse's chief executive, said: "This loss-making scenario cannot continue and the plan offers our remaining staff a secure and positive future."

The Labour Party criticised the closures. Ian McCartney, the shadow employment minister, said: "This announcement is symbolic of Tory Britain. Once again it's short-term boom in the boardroom and long-term bust for the workforce."

However the stores may yet find a buyer. Powerstore, which bought the Homepower chain from East Midlands and Yorkshire Electricity last year, may

be interested. It is believed that the group tried to buy Powerhouse last year but lost out to Hanson.

They would have been wrong. Yesterday the shares fell another 13p to 98p after the group produced another crop of trading warnings, covering every division of its much-shrunk business. It rounded off the dismal tale by revealing that it has been unable to complete the £13m sale of five of its nine US fleece and jersey plants agreed last July.

## Heseltine ticks off engineers for their silence

PETER RODGERS  
Business Editor

Engineers, accountants and industry trade associations were yesterday given a severe ticking off by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, for failing to produce effective and united lobbying bodies able to tackle issues of national importance.

Mr Heseltine was speaking at the launch of the Engineering Council, a new organisation that hopes for the first time to speak for the whole of the engineering profession.

It replaces a previous body of the same name that tried unsuccessfully to speak for the engineering institutions. Half of its members are directly elected by individual engineers from a variety of disciplines.

Mr Heseltine said he had deliberately not asked his officials to seek the help of Britain's various engineering institutions in research on his two white papers on competitiveness because he did not think they would have had anything useful to contribute.

Speaking to an audience largely composed of engineers, he asked: "Was I wrong? Would I really have got an input from engineers? That was not the way we felt."

"We went to the CBI, because the CET had set up a National

Manufacturing Council which put competitiveness at the leading edge of its debate."

Mr Heseltine said engineers were central to the debate about how to improve Britain's competitiveness, but he complained that they were never heard from.

He said: "I don't remember the engineers over the last decade, two decades, three decades - 10 decades frankly - saying it was intolerable the way engineering and all that goes with it has been marginalised in the education of this country, to the point at which we aren't developing young people trained and equipped as some of our peers are doing."

He added: "This is why people like me are trying to get people like you to become more involved in society."

Mr Heseltine widened the ticking off to include others, saying: "You have exactly the same problem with the accountants. People have tried to bring them together and they have failed. You have got exactly the same problem with the trade associations."

He acknowledged that some progress was being made but said: "It is slow, it is painful and if you look at it from the outside the arguments why progress does not take place stand up to no sort of intellectual scrutiny."

### IN BRIEF

#### PPP set to take on plc status

PPP, the UK's second biggest private medical insurer, is expected to announce tomorrow that it is ditching provident status to become a public limited company worth around £500m, writes John Willcock. The move will allow PPP, formerly Private Patient Plan, to sell off part of its equity, form joint ventures or float on the Stock Exchange if it so wishes. Last night a spokeswoman for PPP said: "We are not commenting on any speculation. We have undertaken a major strategic review of our business and we're going to make an announcement about its future shape on Sunday." City sources suggested that Norwich Union or Legal & General may be interested in taking a stake in the new company.

#### Friends Provident drops CINMan talks

Friends Provident, the life assurance mutual, has pulled out of talks to buy CIN Management, British Coal's pension fund management company. British Coal said yesterday that after discussions last month, CINMan trustees "have now formed the view that full agreement cannot be reached between the parties and discussions have accordingly been brought to an end". With £1.7bn under management, CINMan is one of Britain's largest pension fund managers. British Coal is selling it as part of privatisation.

#### Fraud squad investigates Stroud firm

The fraud squad is investigating the Stroud-based firm Money Matters Independent Financial Advisers, run by Paul Gilson, which has been shut down by Fimbra, the watchdog. Although unauthorised to handle money on clients' behalf, Mr Gilson is alleged to have taken money from clients who thought it was being directly invested in life offices and unit trusts, but found it was used for the cash flow of the business. Mr Gilson was ordered to pay costs of £6,515.

#### Fuji Bank to unravel cross-holdings

Fuji Bank is reportedly to sell off part of its shareholdings in the other big brokerage houses, signalling a possible unravelling of the complex net of corporate cross-holdings which have traditionally sustained Japan's great industrial-financial collectives. According to the Nikkei newspaper, Fuji Bank has decided to shed one-fifth of its stakes in the Nomura, Daiwa and Nikko securities firms.

#### Prince Al Waleed 'talking to Granada'

The Saudi Prince Al Waleed Bin Talal is talking to Granada Group about buying the prestige hotels it is acquiring from Forte and Granada's 68 percent shareholding in the Savoy group. The billionaire investor is "talking to Granada about everything... about all the hotels they have," a Saudi source said.

#### Motor World boosts profits to £5.12m

Boosted by the acquisition of Charlie Browns, and despite one-off acquisition costs, the car parts and accessories group Motor World increased profits by 15 per cent to £5.12m in the year to October. The dividend for the year increased from 7.7p to 8.2p.

### THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

## Powerful arguments over Rolls

Differing views make for a healthy market but rarely is the City as divided as it currently finds itself over Rolls-Royce, the aero engine maker. Brokers have either been strong buyers of the stock for some time now and are feeling pretty smug about the 10 per cent outperformance of the market over the past year, or they are doggedly persisting with long-held bearish views.

The sell argument goes as follows. Rolls' main customers, the airlines, have been so weakened by recession and deregulation that they are having to use equipment longer and more efficiently. That in turn has led to low capacity utilisation at Rolls and its competitors, which has squeezed prices and margins.

Other problems include the increasing reliability of engines, which has cut the importance of spares to the final profit equation. The importance of that issue was highlighted by the sniping surrounding Rolls' recent contract to supply Singapore Airlines with its new Trent engine. A loss leader, cried the opposition; a profitable deal, responded Rolls.

With those sort of low-quality earnings, the bears believe a discount to the rest of the market is appropriate, say 20 per cent, resulting in a share price of less than 150p. As the bulls are glad to point out, however, it hasn't quite worked out that way. Yesterday, the shares closed 4.5p higher at 213p, continuing a strong recent run.

That outperformance reflects Rolls' in-

creasingly strong position in the Far East, which in air traffic as in most things these days is where the action is. Passenger volumes in the Pacific Rim are growing at 10 per cent a year and Rolls claims over 60 per cent of the so-called high thrust (big engine) market.

The company's new Trent engine has a big weight advantage over its rivals, which translates into up to 30 extra revenue-generating passengers per flight. It also has greater potential than other engines in the power generation market, where two engines operating together can create enough power for a town with a population of 10,000.

Recovering military engine sales, largely thanks to Tornados sales to Saudi Arabia, should ensure that profits continue their rapid bounce, reaching perhaps £210m this year and £265m next.

On a prospective price/earnings ratio of 17 falling to 15, the shares are still not overpriced compared with that sort of growth, but they have probably enjoyed the best of their run.

## Dawson still feels high street chill

It is very difficult to find anything positive to say about Dawson International, the up-market jerseys to down-market vests group. In the space of just over two years

it has slashed its dividend, written off more than half its shareholders' funds and caused a furore with a £2.2m pay-off for the four directors who presided over this mess. Bruised shareholders who supported the rescue rights issue at 120p in 1994 might have believed that, after this catalogue of disaster, nothing worse could befall Dawson.

They would have been wrong. Yesterday the shares fell another 13p to 98p after the group produced another crop of trading warnings, covering every division of its much-shrunk business. It rounded off the dismal tale by revealing that it has been unable to complete the £13m sale of five of its nine US fleece and jersey plants agreed last July.

The profit warning left analysts slashing around a third off forecasts for the current year ending in March, leaving a figure of around £10m.

It is clear that new chairman Derek Finlay is having more trouble than expected in turning around Dawson. The JE Morgan thermal underwear business in the US is already a long-running sore. Now its main customers, principally Wal-Mart, the giant discount group, are suffering at the hands of sluggish consumer demand.

In the UK, the middle market Pringle knitwear continues to suffer in the face of a high street also reluctant to spend. Similar problems seem to be affecting Dawson's fur fabrics business and are feeding through to the cashmere side.

Given the string of profit warnings from others in the sector and his short tenure at the top, Mr Finlay and his team are likely to be given the benefit of the doubt this time. But a promise to maintain the final dividend will be of little consolation to long-standing shareholders like PDFM, which owns 25 per cent of the company.

The temptation to sell out to the first serious bidder will be strong, unless Dawson can quickly show that its problems are not better solved as part of a bigger group. The shares are well overvalued on a forward multiple above 17, but the brave should hold on for a bid.

### Rolls Royce: at a glance

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Five-year record					
Turnover (£2m)	3.52	3.56	3.52	3.16	
Pre-tax profits (£2m)	51	184	76	101	150
Earnings per share (pence)	2.43	20.4	5.95	8.82	9.20
Dividends per share (pence)	7.25	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.50

Market value: £3.12bn, share price 213p

Share price



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# Why wait for the off-chance that Milan might draw Rangers in the European Cup when a cosy little carve-up could ensure it?

First Maurice Watkins, a director of Manchester United, reveals he has recently been dining, drinking and negotiating with officials from Milan. Then David Murray, chairman of Rangers, admits his club have been in discussions with a variety of interested parties prior to a meeting of top UEFA brass in Brussels next week. But the thing that really makes you think something is in the air is when Rick Parry, chief executive of the Premier League, starts fuming about "wild speculation". Yes, this week's big cash-printing idea in football is the European Super League.

No more ghastly away days at Dens Park or The Dell, runs the theory: San Siro here we come. You can just imagine the eyes in boardrooms spinning round to jockpot as the salvaging prospect was surveyed. What a thought for them as they totted up on their mental

calculators the sums that television would be prepared to pay for Manchester United versus Milan, or Milan versus Rangers, or, er, Rangers versus United.

Suggesting to the finance director of a top football club that the European Super League is an idea not worth pursuing, however, is a bit like trying to tell the board of a public utility that privatisation may be a false salvation. When money flaps in front of eyes, it tends to blind. Particularly when, at first superficial glance, the Super League has some attractions above that pound-heavy, tire-laden bottom line. Rangers, for instance, might argue with some justification that they have grown too big for their domestic structure and that their fans have wearied of endless games against St Mirren. And those who administer Manchester United might suggest that they are

above the tiresome necessity of qualifying for the European Cup and ought to be allowed to offload their supporters (aka Sky Television) to the guarantee of games against the top teams in Europe, rather than the inconvenience of being drawn against Rotor Volgograd.

To argue against change in football always casts you as the kind of pitiful Luddite who thinks freezing on terraces is the one true way to watch the game, that ownership of a satellite dish is evidence of a deal out with Beelzebub and that admission to grounds should be available free to all on prescription. As an idea, however, a European Super League should be forgotten as soon as possible.

You can see how it started. In America, sport, like the rest of the entertainment industry, is now entirely event-driven. The calendar

Jim White



ON SATURDAY

stagers from World Series to Superbowl to the comeback of Magic Johnson to Tyson's big return. Each encounter is whipped by a media feeding frenzy into a curdle of hyperbole: no pre-spat scene-setter is complete without a report on how much touts are charging for front

row seats. British sporting salesmanship, lagging years behind its American role model, has just started to catch on. Typical of the mood is Jonathan Pearce, football reporter for Capital Radio, whose commentary style suggests he is on the point of ejaculation through excitement when Wimbledon win a throw midway in their own half 89 minutes into a 0-0 stalemate with QPR. And it is the event that sells, why not manufacture it? Why wait for the off-chance that Milan might be drawn against Rangers in the European Cup when a cosy little carve-up could ensure it? Why not have United play Barca every week? What idea fails to recognise is that the attraction of football is in the mix. Grinding out tough draws in unattractive locations, overcoming feisty lower division opponents on sandpits in the fourth round of

the Cup, tonking the micky mouse outfit who only scraped promotion via a penalty shoot-out in the playoffs, these can mean as much as the big trip abroad. And the big trip abroad is all the better if it has been earned rather than arranged.

All very well, argue the money-lovers, this whingeing on about romance. But it will count as little compared to the prospect of watching the best in the world lining up in your centre circle every other week. Your wallets will soon open when the visions include Weah, Romario and Del Piero rather than Shipperley, Dowie and Miall Quinn. Experience, however, suggests otherwise. Take Blackburn Rovers. Rather in the manner British Rail was divided up before sale, the Champions' League has the appearance of a preparatory shadow for a Euro-Super competition. As

Blackburn floundered in it last autumn, stumbling from embarrassment to humiliation, their crowds withered; by the end, not even the schoolchildren offered free seats behind the goals could be bothered to turn out. Not much point these games offering the best football in Europe: it was only being played by one side. Better to save your money and lungs for the big ones, the ones which count, against Manchester City and Bolton. Because what the architects of the European Super League fail to recognise is that the victory the fan really wants to see his team achieve is not over some set of fancy pants from the other side of the Continent, but over the plebs from the other side of town. But then, only a pitiful Luddite would ever suggest the fans' preference might carry any weight when it comes to the future of football.

## McMillan remains a free spirit

Despite indifferent promoters, one of Britain's most intelligent boxers is sure he will be back with a title challenge. Greg Wood reports

They still introduced him as "Sweet C" on Tuesday night, but perhaps he should have been rechristened "Sweet FA". Colin McMillan, the former World Boxing Organisation featherweight champion of the world, now has something in common with anyone who has ever been punched, be it in a playground or a pub—they have all been thumped for free.

Justin Murphy, McMillan's opponent at the Barking Theatre on Tuesday, did not do a great deal of thumping, but it was not for want of trying. Beneath a veneer of ring rust—this was McMillan's first fight for many months—the speed of thought, foot and hand which once saw him hailed as one of the finest talents Britain has produced was as compelling as ever. Nor was there the faintest hint of the shoulder injury which had cost him the world crown four years earlier, a problem now cured by an American surgeon.

Murphy was finally stopped after four and a half rounds in which punches had landed from

every angle, and his attempts to respond had found their target long gone. McMillan was in a different league to the other seven fighters on Tuesday's card, and he was the reason that 600 spectators had filled the Broadway almost to its capacity. It is all the more astonishing, then, that McMillan left the ring without a penny to show for his efforts.

Those whose sport is their living are generally as reluctant as any other worker to do their job for nothing. When the sport in question is boxing, it is all but unheard of, but for McMillan there was no clearer way to register his frustration at being unable to secure a match worthy of his talents.

"It was a big decision and I wasn't over-keen," he says, "but I'd be walking along the street and people would say, 'What are you doing now?' I've been training for seven months and it's soul-destroying when there's no goal. It had got to the point where I had to fight."

But why for nothing, in a small-time venue and a pitiful



Lot of bottle: Colin McMillan takes liquid on board as he starts to rebuild his career by dismissing Justin Murphy in Barking on Tuesday

Photograph: Robert Hallam

There's limits to how much you want to be exploited to get a title shot

## Quotes of the week

In the last 20 minutes against Queen's Park Rangers the ball was played long, I am happy playing in mid-field but not when I get a striped neck-watching the ball. **Russell Griffith** after Chelsea's 2-1 win at QPR on Monday.

NBA players are smart enough to know you get the best from an unprotected star on the basketball court. **Rory Selkirk**, Golden State centre, on Magic Johnson's return.

It moved around so much that it looked as if it had deflated in mid-air. **Collymore** on his zig-zagging free-kick which went in against Aston Villa.

Carl and Ben wanted to kill each other. They wanted to fight each other all the time. You're talking about two very scientific men. **Donovan Bailey** on the rivalry of Carl Lewis and Ben Johnson.

Rangers had the rub of the green a few days ago. **Paul Parker** fluked a header, following his non-league side's 3-0-1 Tennent's Scottish Cup third round defeat by Rangers.

I shouldn't have to put a drink in a bottle for a few years. **Marky**, **Garland** who scored the only goal to send Rangers to the final of the FA Cup fourth round victory at Reading.

It keeps trying to tell everyone that it's all about the man in training—it's all about the man in training—it's all about the man in training. **Ryan Giggs** on Parker's goal.

All the lads have said they will stop their lives coming along in future. **Harry Redknapp**, West Ham's manager, on their handsome new Portugal signing, **Denis**.

## TODAY'S NUMBER

5.8m

The pound sterling for which the Real Madrid striker, **Raul**, has insured himself is less than the 18-year-old season's top scorer. The policy runs for a year.

## WEEKEND FIXTURE GUIDE

### Today's pools check

#### FA CUP FIRST ROUND

1 Arsenal v Coventry  
2 Aston Villa v Leeds  
3 Blackburn v Bolton  
4 Liverpool v Tottenham  
5 Manchester City v QPR  
6 Newcastle v Sheffield Wed  
7 Southampton v Everton  
8 West Ham v Nottingham Forest  
9 Wimbledon v Manchester Utd

#### ENDSLEY INSURANCE LEAGUE

10 Barnsley v Watford  
11 Grimsby v Derby  
12 Huddersfield v Tynes  
13 Ipswich v Millwall  
14 Leicester v Luton  
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16 Southend v Millwall  
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#### JERSEY EASTERN LEAGUE

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20 Brentford v Burnley  
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34 Darlington v Leyton Orient  
35 Hartlepool v Rochdale  
36 Lincoln City v Colchester  
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38 Plymouth v Chester

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## India earn a warning

### Hockey

#### BILL COLWILL

The international federation has told India that if they withdraw from their commitment to play England at Milton Keynes on 24 March at the opening of the National Stadium they will be fined and their international teams suspended from competition—including the Olympic Games.

This action follows a comment by the Indian coach during the Olympic qualifying event in Barcelona that India would only be sending a side of Under-21 players and ex-internationals.

The decision of certain members of the Great Britain side returning from Barcelona not to play this weekend, and the absence of England Under-18 players on a training weekend, could cause a few surprises in the cup and league programme.

Southgate have not selected their captain, Soma Singh, and John Shaw—who were in Spain for their First Division league game today away to Bournville, the coach David Vinson not wishing to disrupt a winning side.

Reading will be without their captain, Jon Wyatt, for their fifth-round FA Cup game away to Richmond and in the league tomorrow at Teddington.

Teddington will be without Britain's captain, Jason Laslett, who was injured against Malaysia last week for their line-up at Bristol against Firebrands in the cup and at home against Reading in the league.

Cup holders Guildford travel to Beeston today, where they should advance to the quarter-finals. They stay in the Midlands for a league game against Canconk who welcome back Chris Mayer and their captain, Kalbur Takher, from the Britain squad.

## Meeting for new boys

### Basketball

#### DUNCAN HOOPER

The Budweiser League's two new Americans, both signed to beat this week's transfer deadline, face each other tonight when Thomas Elliott lines up for Manchester Giants against Worthing Bears' Tim Garrett.

Garrett's arrival should inject fresh impetus into an injury-ravaged Worthing, who have lost two of their last three games after last season's defeat in the League Trophy final by London Towers.

The player/coach Colin Irish, Alan Cunningham, Steve Nelson, Andrew Bailey and Gary Smith all carry injuries, although Smith and Bailey at

least return to the bench after missing last week's defeat at Sheffield Sharks.

Worthing, fifth, are striving for the top-four place which will give them home advantage in the play-off quarter-finals.

Elliott, from Chattanooga, joins a Giants line-up which also recalls the England international, Danny Craven, who has missed the entire season with tendinitis. Craven said: "It's been a long and frustrating period out. I feel fit now and just hope all my injury problems are behind me."

England play Hungary in two internationals on 20 and 21 February at Crystal Palace and Ware, in preparation for their European Championship game in Russia on 28 February.

### Other sports

#### ATHLETICS: AAA Indoor Championships (Birmingham)

500m: Maccles piers County Athletic.

800m: Maccles piers County Athletic.

1000m: Maccles piers County Athletic.

### Other sports

#### ATHLETICS: AAA Indoor Championships (Birmingham)

500m: Maccles piers County Athletic.

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1000m: Maccles piers County Athletic.











## sport

## Kelly seeks football's millennium men

As the FA approaches the task of picking its team to take England into the next century, the chief executive tells **Glenn Moore** exactly what he is looking for

Having finally emerged, blinking rather than blinkered, into the 1990s, the Football Association suddenly has the chance to start the next century on time. Whether it grasps the opportunity will depend on three key appointments to be made within the next six months. Get them right and England could regain its position as one of the world's leading footballing powers. Get them wrong and it will be condemned to the backwaters.

Four men will lead the FA into the next millennium. One of them, Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, is already in place at Lancaster Gate. On the situations vacant board are the posts of England coach, technical director and FA chairman. They are out there, somewhere, but finding them is not proving easy.

The most urgent appointment is the first, Terry Venables' replacement. This is a post every leading candidate has publicly declined. One of those declarations is about to be tested with Jimmy Armfield expected to meet with Bryan Robson next week.

While the FA's swollen bureaucracy dictates the coach will be chosen by the 13-man international committee (average age: late 60s, oldest member: 87) it is likely to rubber-stamp the choice of a five-man sub-committee featuring Kelly and advised by Armfield.

Whoever gets the job will be taking it on a permanent basis – the prospect of filling in while Venables deals with his court cases is not, said Kelly this week, an option.

“One case [the libel action with Alan Sugar] is scheduled for October – we will have played a quarter of the World Cup qualifiers by then,” Kelly said. “Then there are other cases. We would be laying ourselves open to immense criticism if we allowed uncertainty to develop. You do not know how cases will pan out.”

“We have given up hope of Terry changing his mind but, in seeking for his successor, you cannot do much better than looking at what Terry brings to the job: tactical awareness, a knowledge of international football, imagination, pragmatism. He is liked and respected by the players. He has instilled an awareness of the realities of international football in them and is in the process of instilling self-belief. The new man will have to be resilient. You do not want someone who will be knocked off course the moment a problem comes up.”

Venables' legal entanglements also rule him out of the technical director's post – although, given the problems the FA is having in appointing one, he may be free before it is filled.

The job was originally mooted in November 1994 and the FA has been searching for the right man ever since. Twice the four-man selection sub-committee – Kelly, Armfield, Rick Parry, of the Premier League, and Jimmy Hill – thought they had found him. But both Gerard Houllier and Andy Roxburgh declared themselves committed elsewhere just as they were about to be recommended for the job.

“We are aiming high on this one,” Kelly said. “We are still talking to people but we are not on the verge of making an appointment.”

The brief is wide, said Kelly, as he reached for a folder in his recently refurbished office – adorned by pictures from recent England internationals; an unusual portrait of a besuited Kelly relaxing on a football pitch; and an old award from *When Saturday Comes* for being “the person who had done most harm to the English game.”

Reading from a long list, Kelly said the technical director “must decide if we need full-time coaches for the Under-21s and the

## Situations vacating: key positions the FA must fill



Salary: Negotiable – Terry Venables is on £150,000.

Reason for Vacancy: Resignation of Terry Venables.

Start Date: Before Euro 96 opens in June.

Task: To qualify for, and then win, the 1998 World Cup.

Problems: A dearth of quality players is compounded by a draining club programme which leaves many of the best either injured or jaded. The survivors then have to learn a new style as the English game is inherently incompatible with world requirements. Also has to deal with mischievous dissenters within the FA and malevolent attacks from without. Not a job for anyone with skeletons in the cupboard.

The Favourites: Bryan Robson (Manager of Middlesbrough and England assistant coach): Players and pundits' choice. Has made bright start in management and has experience of coaching in international set-up. Kevin Keegan (Manager of Newcastle United): Playing and management record the equal of Robson but probably more attached to current job. Impressed when managing Under-21's. Gerry Francis (Manager of Tottenham): Good organiser of players. Available, he works without a contract, but may not want the hassle.

The Possibles: Frank Clark (Manager of Nottingham Forest): Skilled at utilising limited resources. Glenn Hoddle (Manager of Chelsea): Commands enormous respect among young players. Howard Kendall (Manager of Sheffield United): Could have taken the job when Robson left. Glory days now some years past but promising start at Bramall Lane shows the nous is still there. Howard Wilkinson (Manager of Leeds United): A Tayloresque tendency to ramble from the lip hides a sharp and knowledgeable mind. Ray Wilkins (Manager of QPR): Former England captain widely respected at home and abroad. Bobby Robson (Manager of Porto): Ideally qualified having done it all before. Post-Taylor, his reign appears a golden age.

The Outsiders: Jack Charlton (retired as manager of Republic of Ireland): Hard to imagine him putting up with inevitable criticism of playing style. Don Howe (FA Technical Co-ordinator and England assistant coach): Unparalleled experience but better as an assistant than a figurehead. Peter Reid (Sunderland): Now reviving Roker, his time at Manchester City looks better than ever in retrospect.

The No-hopers: Kenny Dalglish (Director of Football at Blackburn Rovers), Brian Clough (retired), George Graham (banned).



Salary: £175,000-£200,000.

Reason for Vacancy: New position.

Start Date: As soon as possible.

Task: To establish a coaching structure and style to take England into the 21st Century. Will influence football at every level from primary school to Premiership. The most important position in the English game.

Problems: At national level must overcome club v country dispute. Lower down a lot of petty feuds will feel threatened, from the English Schools FA to club-based centres of excellence. Already turned the job down: Gerard Houllier (French Football Federation): Former national manager, now technical director in France. Confirmed Anglophile but already tied up in French preparation for '98 World Cup which they host. Andy Roxburgh (UEFA): Former Scotland manager, now technical director of UEFA. Able administrator, widespread experience of coaching at all levels and knowledge of English game, but committed to UEFA.

Already declared unavailable: Howard Wilkinson (Manager of Leeds United): Interviewed but then ruled himself out. Suitable, but probably unavailable: Louis van Gaal (Coach of Ajax): Came through the coaching ranks at Ajax to produce the most attractive, innovative and successful side currently in the club game. Alas, happy where he is. Johan Cruyff (Coach of Barcelona): Likely to be available after sowing of relationship with Barcelona. But thought to see his future in Spain. Franz Beckenbauer (President of Bayern Munich): Hard to prise away from Kitzbühel home and challenge of reviving Bayern. Roy Hodgson (Coach of Internazionale): England's most successful current coaching export. Unlikely to be tempted having finally achieved ambition of managing top Italian side. David Pleat (Manager of Sheffield Wednesday): Excellent coach but has already turned down a similar post at Tottenham because he preferred to work with players.

Not quite suitable: Dario Gradi (Manager of Crewe): A coach since 1968, earmarked for position within FA structure but not seen as enough of a political animal for top job. Dave Sexton (Under-21 coach): Involved with England under Robson and Venables. Might not welcome such a high-profile role and, at 65, too old. Rinus Michels: Dutch guru of Total Football now a freelance coaching consultant. Age is against him.

Outsiders: John Cartwright: Former head of national school and very respected youth coach. First involved with England more than a decade ago. Carlos Alberto Parreira: Steered Brazil to World Cup success. Now doing well with Fenerbahce in Turkey after disappointing spell with Valencia in Spain.

No-hopers: Terry Venables, Charles Hughes. Which leaves: Don Howe (FA): As technical co-ordinator he is effectively doing the job already – and doing it well. Has the necessary experience but prefers hands-on coaching to administration. Would need persuading to make the post permanent. May end up doing the job by default until the likes of Houllier, Roxburgh or van Gaal become available.



Salary: Unpaid – but the last three have all received a knighthood.

Reason for Vacancy: Retirement of Sir Bert Millichip.

Start Date: End of Euro 96 in June.

Task: Diplomacy, in public and in private. Must promote English interests abroad and keep the peace at home.

Problems: The lack of trust and sympathy within the various factions of the English game – the Premier League, the Football League, and the wider “amateur” game. The danger of hooligans ruining England image overseas.

The Favourites: David Dein (Arsenal): Ambitious. Key figure in Premier League's commercial development. Too smooth for some, and not just the old farts. Geoff Thompson (Sheffield & Hallamshire FA): Long serving tough head of the disciplinary committee. Keith Wiseman (Southampton): Well-connected, not many enemies. Youngest member (50) of international committee.

The Outsiders: Sir Roland Smith (Manchester United): Chairman of the FA, not the football club. Commercial background too strong. Chris Wilcock (Gloucestershire FA): Sir Bert's deputy. Inoffensive but not dynamic. Ian Stott (Oldham): Reputation as sane and moderate administrator spoiled when he led abortive revolt of Endleigh First Division.

The No-hopers: Alan Sugar (Tottenham), Ken Bates (Chelsea) and Ron Noades (Crystal Palace): Plenty of ideas, but even more enemies. Robert Chase (Norwich): Has wanted it too obviously. Sir Bert Millichip: Wants to carry on, but he is 82.

The Abstainers: Sir John Hall (Newcastle United): Energetic and visionary but committed to Newcastle. Jimmy Hill (Fulham): The only contender to have played, or managed, or refereed, or commented at the highest level. Would have been interesting.

Likely Choice: Keith Wiseman – A compromise, but probably a good one.

## Barnes sent us packing, the air went out of my inflatable Bee

It started in Cairo, 1989. I couldn't find an English paper, but a French magazine told me Brentford had beaten Walsall 1-0 in an FA Cup third-round replay. The last 32. Wow. When? Today. Wow. Who against? I found the previous week's *Sunday Express* and looked up the pools fixtures – Manchester City at home.

The time difference meant that I could make it. I borrowed the money and bought a ticket with No-beer Air, or something like that. I arrived at Heathrow as sober as a pilgrim, got a cab to the ground and tried to beg my way into the sell-out. The gatekeeper wouldn't have any of it.

The Manchester City fans who had gathered around me came up: “We've only come from Manchester, this lad's come from Egypt.” But I had to see the game. Eventually I found the weak link, jumped over a wall into a toilet and witnessed a surreal 3-1 triumph. Amazing. The last 16.

Somehow, three weeks later, I was running and screaming down the icy roads of Madison, Wisconsin, after reading in *USA Today* of a 2-0 victory at Blackburn. The last eight. Liverpool at Anfield. Goodbye America and high-kicking down to South America. I had to get a ticket for this one.

FAN'S EYE VIEW  
No 135  
Brentford  
PAUL MUNFORD

What a day. For 80 minutes Andy Sinton ran the show for us, but some magic from John Barnes sent us packing and the air went out of my inflatable Bee.

Since then, Second Division champions, immediate relegation, no cup runs and skint. That was seven years ago and I thought that was my lot, but it's all beginning to happen again. We've had a bad season, pre-season favourites for promotion and presently 22nd in the table. If you lose in the first round of the cup then it's all over for eight months. Farnborough at home, 1-1 draw and the faith rolls away a little. But the replay is live on Sky and from pub-comfort, I enjoy a delightful 4-0 walkover, the first away win of the season and some more winter weeks of fantasy.

Next round, Bournemouth away, 10 men for an hour, a heroic 1-0 win and we're in the draw with the real clubs, the ones my mates support. Short straw, another away tie, but this time at Norwich, the team

that beat Bayern Munich recently, but who had since lost their way a little. After five minutes at Carrow Road, I knew we had a chance. Norwich won a corner and nobody wanted to take it, we were playing a demoralised team.

Joy of all joys, we win 2-1 and we were better than them. Then comes the draw again and yet another bad tie. Charlton away, Down comes the big freeze and we're in the draw for the fifth round. Liverpool again. Anfield again.

Of course, it all depends, but suddenly, my whole life lifts off and I can deal with the nightmare of the previous season. We had been up there all year, losing out only to money-bags Birmingham after a last, frenetic Saturday. Bad timing, Bees. The runner-up had to enter the play-offs, no automatic promotion this year. Not even a day out at Wembley, beaten on penalties at Griffin Park.

Then, for the first time, I realised that we would never be one of the big boys, we would

never win the European Cup. That was a difficult one to accept. I always thought that it was only a matter of time. However, we do retain style, as can be shown by the presence in our team of Dean Martin and Paul Smith. We've also got some candidates. The best coaches love coaching; by nature, they would rather be on the practice pitch than behind a desk. “It is a problem,” Kelly said. “We are looking for someone of stature, with leadership qualities, but someone who can also administrate. It is more a case of directing operations than being at the coal face with

the sleeves rolled up. You would not take the best coach unless he had some ability to organise – otherwise you will never get anything done. There are not many people who combine those qualities.”

The chairman's best work will also be done out of sight, in quiet corridors and smoke-filled rooms. This is one appointment where the “old buffers” still have influence. The new chairman will be elected from and by the 88-member FA Council. Just seven represent the Premier League, 11 are from the Endleigh and six from semi-professional non-League. There are 53 county FA representatives and 11 others. They include the independent schools, the Universities and, by

some curious anachronism, both Australia and New Zealand.

Not all these will see the future of the game progressing the same way as the powerful barons of the Premiership. Thus Kelly's belief that “the most important thing is unity. Whoever the new chairman is, whether he comes from the professional game, the services, wherever, once he takes office he must cease to represent them and work for the unity of the FA.”

“They are each important appointments. If the next England coach comes in and wins the World Cup in 1998, the benefits will be immense. If the next chairman of the FA stays for six years and we go into the next century in great shape, established

## Gascoigne back for Rangers

## SCOTTISH FOOTBALL

With a third of the Scottish League Premier Division campaign remaining, Rangers lead by a single point from Celtic. Walter Smith's champions will have Paul Gascoigne back for today's visit to Parkhead while Celtic, unbeaten in 19 Premier games, meet Hibernian at Parkhead.

The Celtic manager, Jimmy Burns, who has Andreas Thom back after a two-match injury absence, believes long-suffering captain Paul McGinlay has been a different man since lifting the Scottish Cup last May. “I have seen a remarkable transformation in him as a person,” Burns said as Celtic pursue their first title since 1985.

Hibs have won only once in 1996 and crashed out of the Scottish Cup against Kilmarnock last week. Joe McLaughlin makes his debut in defence after arriving from Falkirk but Steven Tweed, Gordon Hunter and Gareth Evans are injured and Darren Dods and Pat McGinlay are suspended.

Although Gascoigne is back after suspension for Rangers, Richard Gough might be missing at Thistle with a back problem while Gordon Durie (groin) is doubtful. The Dutch international Peter van Vossen is poised to make his full debut.

## South Africa's big day

South Africa meet Tunisia today in an African Nations' Cup final that neither side were expected to reach.

Playing their first continental football championship following the end of anti-apartheid sanctions, the South Africans are looking for another triumph to follow the Rugby World Cup last June and the demolition of England's cricket team. President Nelson Mandela, who has become a good-luck charm for South African sports, was to meet the team yesterday evening.

For the Tunisians, who will be the underdogs before a crowd of 80,000 frenetic South African supporters in Soweto, the final is their first since losing to Ghana in 1965 and it is a chance to make up for a humiliating first-round exit when they were hosts in 1994.

South Africa are favourites.

“It will be a tough match as finals go, but our boys are ready,” the South African coach, Clive Barker, said. “It should be close.”

Controversy flared on Thursday when the head of the Tunisian side, Nasser ben Hachine, threatened to forfeit the match in protest over hotel problems on arrival in Johannesburg after beating Zambia 4-2 in Wednesday's semi-final.

The Tunisians apparently arrived at their hotel and were told none of the rooms were ready due to renovations. The players waited five hours in the lobby and had to cancel training. When they were checked in, the rooms stank of varnish. Ben Hachine later backed down, saying his team had not come so far in the tournament against all expectations to turn back now.

South Africa are favourites.

“They are each important appointments. If the next England coach comes in and wins the World Cup in 1998, the benefits will be immense. If the next chairman of the FA stays for six years and we go into the next century in great shape, established

within Uefa and Fifa as a significant force, he will be immensely successful. But the influence of the technical director could be equal to either.

“Sometimes we get involved with so much administration, promotion, and so on, we almost forget what we are here for, which is playing football. That is why the technical director is so important. He will have a major influence on the way the game goes in this country.”

No one could accuse Kelly of forgetting the FA's roots. The 50-year-old was out there again yesterday, seeking his fifth goal of the season for the staff side – and still in need of technical direction.

“We make our selection on what we see and after all that has happened felt it better for him not to be included.”

The next manager of the Republic of Ireland is likely to be Millwall's Mick McCarthy, following the decision by the Wimbledon manager Joe Kinnear to turn the job down. “It breaks my heart to say it was the right job, but at the wrong time,” Kinnear said.

McCarthy can only dream, but Arrigo Sacchi is to be paid £1.7m to coach the Italian national side for a further two-and-a-half years.

Savage had been punched as he warmed up. A police investigation pinned the blame on Birmingham.

Ray Harford yesterday claimed relations were good between himself and David Baty, while admitting that the midfielder was not in Blackburn's squad for today's home derby against Bolton.

The Rovers manager, who refused to comment on speculation linking Baty with a £3.5m move to Newcastle, said: “I have not had a row or an argument with David Baty.” On the player's omission, he added:

هنا من أعلام



# Ferguson's future is a distraction

Guy Hodgson on a vital weekend for the Premiership's title-chasing clubs

Manchester United and Selhurst Park, it seems, come together and make a volatile concoction. On the first return to the ground where Eric Cantona performed football's most infamous scissor kick, trouble could be brewing again.

Attention today had expected to fall on the Frenchman who leads United's attempt to overhaul Premiership leaders Newcastle against Wimbledon just over a year since he assaulted a Selhurst Park spectator. Instead his manager, Alex Ferguson, is threatening to divert the media's gaze away from the pitch.

Questions that the club were stalling negotiations over a contract to supplement the current one which ends next year were not denied by Ferguson. "I approached the club last summer," he said, "and the matter was put back to January. Now I don't know what's happening. In a perfect world I would like to spend the rest of my career at Old Trafford, but I can't stay without a contract."

Ferguson was also adamant that United will have their own security presence today despite warnings from Selhurst Park that Ned Kelly, Cantona's minder in away matches since his return from suspension on 1 October, would not be allowed in the players' tunnel. "Ned Kelly is part of the official party, they can't stop him," he said. "If we choose to have him on the bench, it's our decision."

All of which overshadowed United's preparations for a match they need to win if they are to cause Newcastle the slightest concern. Newcastle Premier-

ship leaders, they entertain Sheffield Wednesday today without the suspended David Ginola and Darren Peacock but seemingly oblivious to tension.

"Pressure is when you are down at the bottom fighting relegation," Robert Lee, their England midfielder, said, "not when you're nine points clear with a game in hand. I can't see why we can't extend our lead."

There will be less pressure at Southampton today, too, on Duncan Ferguson. The Scot will be playing in Everton's colours for the first time without the threat of a suspension or a jail sentence to divert his thoughts. A judge this week upheld his appeal against serving the remaining games of a 12-match ban for butting an opponent. "It's been hanging over his head and we are delighted," Joe Royle, his manager, said.

Liverpool, who along with Everton, were given the freedom of their home city this week, will hope their strikers, Stan Collymore and Robbie Fowler, have equal liberty in the Tottenham penalty area.

Having faced the toughest defence in the Premiership, Aston Villa, they now face the team with the best away record, with their manager, Roy Evans, pin-pointing John Barnes rather than his prolific strikers as the key element, in the club's move to second spot.

"He gets our other players going even if he's not having the best of games himself. His influence in the team isn't noticed or appreciated enough by people outside Liverpool."

## Team news

**Arsenal v Coventry**  
The Gunners are unchanged as Adams is being laid off after injury in training. Kevin and McDermott are suspended, while Platt, Bould and Pearce are still injured. Back from suspension to Coventry's defence, but Williams is not. Assistant manager Stephen or young Heilmann, Boland could step in.

**Aston Villa v Leeds**  
Weight could lose his ever-present record for Villa at left-back with a leg injury. Stuart is set to make his fourth start this term. Leads have Kelly, Wedderburn, Beesley, Ford and Chappell suspended. Williams, Heilmann and Renshaw are two-match bans and reserve defender Allen is added to the squad.

**Blackburn v Bolton**  
Rovers likely to be unchanged with Fenton (fractured) their latest casualty. Thompson is in Bolton's squad after eight weeks out following double hernia operations. De Freitas could be recalled at the expense of Blake but defender Jagielka and Jod are injured.

**Liverpool v Tottenham**  
Reds return for Liverpool for first time since November, but he is not expected to start. Renshaw begins two-match ban. Wright or Hargreaves will start. Sinton could make his debut for Spurs.

**Manchester City v QPR**  
Quinn (fractured) and Carr (calf) are doubts for City. Sinton likely to be replaced by QPR defence for QPR. Gellan could play up front after a six-match absence and Wilkins returns himself in the squad.

**Newcastle v Sheffield Wed**  
Ferdinand, Howie and Lee all return for Newcastle but Ginola and Peacock are suspended. Freeman is back in goal for Wednesday, replacing Woods who has had a minor knee operation. Briscoe is ruled out with a blood infection and central defender Watts is added to the squad.

**Southampton v Everton**  
Defender Charlton (ankle) faces fitness test and may replace Bernal for Saints but winger Bentley (ankle) is out for a fortnight. Transfer-listed full-back Jackson is set to step into Everton's defence as Unsworth is out with a bad knee. Eshelby starts a two-match ban and reserve defender Allen is added to the squad.

**West Ham v Notts Forest**  
On-loan Portuguese winger Dani is likely to start on Ham's bench. Australian winger Lazaridis is fit again. Forest, still missing Stone and Pearce, are unchanged.

**Wimbledon v Man United**  
Harford, Eide and Eklou all suspended for Wimbledon, but Jones is back after a four-match ban. Clarke and Eide are complete for place up front. Peltier is poised to make first Premiership appearance since November for United.

**TOMORROW**

**Chelsea v Middlesbrough**  
Dunne joins Wise and Hughes on Chelsea's bench. Johnson or Sinton will step into the back three. Juninho (knee), Pollock (knee) and Whyte (calf) are all missing for Middlesbrough.



Happy returns: Sally Gunnell in Birmingham yesterday looks forward to getting back to competition

Photograph: Peter Jay

## Christie runs as Gunnell returns

Sally Gunnell makes her long-awaited return to competitive action today in the AAA indoor championships, which received an unexpected bonus last night with the news that Linford Christie had been accepted as a late entry.

The event, at Birmingham's National Indoor Arena, thus finds itself with both Britain's Olympic champions, although they are approaching the competition with differing objectives.

Gunnell is hoping to gauge her fitness following a season out with a heel injury which required an operation last year. Christie is seeking to maintain the impressive form which he has demonstrated in the last fortnight with two victories in Australia, where he has been warm-weather training.

Gunnell, whose last competitive outing was in September 1994, has recently returned from South Africa. She said she was determined to retain her Olympic 400 metres hurdles title this summer. "If I did not think I was capable of the gold medal I would not go to Atlanta," Gunnell said. "Simply reaching the final or being satisfied with any medal is not enough. I've had that feeling of what it's like to cross the line first and it's the only one. Barcelona was the highlight of my career."

This weekend, Gunnell will be happy to negotiate two qualifying races and a final of the 400m flat in which she is likely to come up against the European Cup winner, Melanie Neef.

**Mike Rowbottom on the plans of a leading athlete to retain Olympic gold**

Gunnell said: "I'll be very nervous and I hope people will not expect too much from me. I'm not sure how the foot will react to running on the boards. If I get round in one piece and have that competitive feeling back I will be happy."

"What is important is that this is a positive move forward for me. It's lovely to be training and competing again."

Christie made the decision to bring forward his domestic debut after getting back from Australia on Tuesday. He had previously planned to have his first run-out in this country at the Ricoh International on the same track a week from today.

"Linford has been thinking about competing since getting back from Australia," said Sue

Barrett, Christie's agent. "He always likes to support the AAA and this will give him the chance to see how his training is going."

Tony Ward, the BAF spokesman, said Christie had originally been due to run in Germany today. "He had been hoping to go to Stuttgart but he couldn't get into there so we have agreed to let him run here."

Ward confirmed that Christie was one of at least three or four athletes who had been given entry to the championships beyond the official deadline.

Christie's decision to run the 60m will provide an earlier-than-planned riposte to Jason Gardener, the 20-year-old who won in last week's international against Russia in the excellent time of 6.55sec, a run which prompted the comment from Gardener's coach, Dave Leese: "That will rattle a few cases - even in Australia."

Christie will also have been fired up by this week's comments by the world 100m champion, Donovan Bailey, who accused Christie of faking injury in the World Championship final.

## TV adds to Modahl's campaign

The moral pressure on the International Amateur Athletic Federation to respond to Diane Modahl's successful domestic appeal against a doping ban intensifies tonight with the screening of a peak-time television documentary, writes Mike Rowbottom.

**The Diane Modahl Story** (BBC2, 6.25pm) details the British athlete's campaign to clear her name since she was withdrawn from the 1994

Commonwealth Games after testing positive for testosterone. Modahl is currently stuck in limbo. The IAAF stated last month that she was eligible to run anywhere following the British Athletic Federation panel's decision to uphold her appeal in July last year. But the IAAF, which has said the appeal findings were "not acceptable", can re-impose the original four-year ban at an arbitration hearing for which no date has been set.

Since her successful appeal, Modahl has received letters from meeting promoters throughout Europe inviting her to run, but she has not been able to respond. The documentary, filmed in the course of the last year, includes accounts of the scientific research which helped clear Modahl in her appeal, making clear the possibility that her urine sample had undergone radical degradation through poor storage.

## Colombo substitute is ready

**Cricket**

Bombay would be able to host the Sri Lanka-Australia World Cup match at the Wankhede stadium if it was shifted from Colombo following the bomb blast there, according to Bal Mahadalkar, secretary of the Mumbai (formerly Bombay) Cricket Association. "We would be ready to host the match if it was allotted to us," he said yesterday.

The game on 17 February is one of four matches scheduled in Colombo and Kandy, and several of the Australian team have expressed fears for their safety. Their cricket board will discuss the possibility of forfeiting the Sri Lanka match at a meeting next week.

Craig McDermott became the victim of a hoax caller who claimed to have planted a bomb in his house in Brisbane yesterday. It follows a death threat to McDermott from Sri Lanka.

## Smith pulls clear in the heat

**Golf**

Britain's Dean Robertson and Ireland's Paul McGinley overcame stifling heat to share second place at the halfway stage of the Heineken Classic in Perth yesterday.

The Australian Wayne Smith, who shared the overnight lead with the New Zealander, Greg Turner, pulled clear on 10 under after a 68, three ahead of Robertson and McGinley.

As temperatures soared to 37F, Robertson drank 12 bottles of water and several sports drinks during his round, which featured eight birdies - including four in a row - as well as a bogey and a double-bogey in his five-under-par 67.

He found the Australian summer sun hard to cope with. "It's just so difficult to maintain concentration," he said. "The first 13 holes were hot, but bearable, but coming down the stretch was just too hot."

John Daly, who missed the cut by nine shots last year, finally mastered the tight course with a 67 to lift himself to within four shots of the leader. For the second day running, he did not use his driver as he moved to six under thanks to a run of five birdies in seven holes.

Ian Woosnam, who complained after being detained on the course for more than five hours yesterday, was given an official warning for slow play yesterday.

## SPORTING DIGEST

**Badminton**

England's Julie Bradbury and Joanne Hall are No 3 in the latest women's doubles pairs world rankings. Fe Ge and Jun Gu, of China, head the list, with the Korean pair, Young Ah Gil and Hyeon Jung, second. Chris Hunt and Simon Archer are England's best placed men's doubles team in 13th place while Archer and Bradbury are rated No 4 mixed pair. Darren Hall, No 23, is England's highest ranked men's singles player with 35th-placed Joanne Whiting leading the country's challenge in the women's singles.

**Basketball**

Baron "Maggie" Johnson, who returned triumphantly to professional basketball this week, wants to join America's "Olympic team" for this year's Olympic Games in Atlanta. Johnson won an Olympic gold medal in 1992 when he played in the 1992 US team that won the Olympics in Barcelona.

**Baseball**  
Mike Houston (216 Chicago 111; Detroit 87; Texas 110; Miami 124; Philadelphia 104; New York 110; Orlando 102; Dallas 103; Seattle 100; Milwaukee 108; Denver 107; Chicago 101; Cincinnati 99; St. Louis 97; Houston 78 played Thursday).

**Baseball**

Joe Bugner, aged 45, stopped West Turner of the United States, in the third round of their 10-round heavyweight bout at the Perth Entertainment Centre, Australia, yesterday. Bugner, the former European, Commonwealth and British heavyweight champion, returned to the ring last September after an eight-year absence and outpointed Vince Cervi. He now hopes to fight the Englishman, Scott Welch, the current British and Commonwealth champion, for the Commonwealth title in March.

**Football**  
Manchester City's Republic of Ireland defender Alan Kennedy - a £1.6m buy from Middlesbrough - has joined Bradford City on a month's loan.

Roberto Baggio, Jürgen Klinsmann and other established European players will not be at the Atlanta Olympics this summer. UEFA confirmed yesterday that it will not abide by new rules allowing teams to field three big-name players over the age of 23 for the Olympics.

**Football**  
Henderson Classic (Perth) Leading second-round scores (60 or 100 unless stated): 134 W Smith (AUS) 68, 137 P Ginn (AUS) 68, D Robertson 70, 67, 138 R Pampling (AUS) 69, 66, 139 D Daly (AUS) 71, 67.

**Football**  
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**Tennis**  
SHANGHAI MEN'S OPEN (China) Singles, quarter-finals: M Tabbal (AUS) to M Onichino (SA) 6-3, 7-5, 6-2; M Tabbal (AUS) to M Onichino (SA) 6-3, 7-5, 6-2; M Tabbal (AUS) to M Onichino (SA) 6-3, 7-5, 6-2; M Tabbal (AUS) to M Onichino (SA) 6-3, 7-5, 6-2.

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## Majoli's revenge over Seles

**Tennis**

Martina Seles suffered only the second defeat since her comeback when she was beaten 1-6, 7-6, 6-4 by Croatia's Iva Majoli in the quarter-finals of the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo yesterday. The joint world No 1 conceded only three games in beating the 19-year-old in their Australian Open quarter-final meeting last week. "She is clearly a better player today," Seles, who went into the tournament with an injured left shoulder, said. "I was fighting there and I don't know what happened after the first set." She said her shoulder did not affect her game and that she wants to play at the Olympics this summer.

It was Seles's fifth tournament since her 28-month lay-off following a knife attack in 1993.

Majoli now meets Martina Hingis, the 15-year-old from Switzerland who easily beat Japan's only quarter-finalist, Naoko Sawamatsu, 6-1, 6-2. Conchita Martinez and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario scored straight-sets wins to set up an all-Spanish semi-final. Sanchez Vicario, playing her first match in the indoor event after receiving a first-round bye and a walkover on Thursday, beat Magdalena Maleeva, of Bulgaria, 7-5, 6-3.

Tim Henman could win his first ATP event after the defeat of the No 1 seed, Jeff Tarango, in the Shanghai Open. Mark Knowles, of the Bahamas, beat Tarango 5-7, 7-5, 6-2 in yesterday's quarter-finals. Henman plays Andrei Olhovski in today's semi-finals, while Knowles faces Michael Tebbutt, of Australia.

## Foster eligible for trials

**Swimming**

Mark Foster, the former world 50 metres freestyle short-course champion, can compete in Britain's Olympic trials in Sheffield next month despite a three-month ban for failing a drug test. The 25-year-old tested positive for cannabis at a meeting in July as a member of the French national team. British and international officials said yesterday the ban - from 26 January to 26 April - applies

only to meetings in France. Gunnar Werner, secretary of swimming's world governing body, pointed out that Fina do not list cannabis among their banned substances. Foster has always maintained that he passively inhaled the small amount of cannabis involved.

Dave Haller, Foster's City of Cardiff coach, said: "We are pleased this is out of the way because it's been dragging on. Mark will be a different person now he has got this off his back."

## INDEPENDENT

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## SPORT



## ENGLAND'S THREE WISE MEN?

Is this the trio to transform English football? Page 22

## FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP: Wales arrive with new confidence as they play on the champions' uncertainty



The running man: Jeremy Guscott (centre, with ball) rehearses his Twickenham lines of attack as England train at Roehampton yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

## England limit vision to victory

STEVE BALE

Rugby Union Correspondent

If England are indeed assailed with doubt - which may be true, but is also a convenient Welsh theory - then they were not at all when Mike Catt limped out of yesterday's final English training session at the Bank of England ground in Roehampton before this afternoon's Anglo-Welsh confrontation at Twickenham.

Catt, as it happens, has not looked quite as safe as the Bank of England as England's full-back this season though Jack Rowell, the manager, could be excused for being more concerned about having a strike full-back who seldom strikes. Rowell regards such a player as a prerequisite of attacking rugby, so perhaps it becomes a little clearer why England have been doing so little of it.

Catt removed himself to the team hotel in Richmond and as he was not immediately pursued

by either the England doctor or physiotherapist a jarred knee - on ice, where England's champagne rugby also remains - will not prevent the South African from winning a 15th cap for the land of his mother.

The Land of My Fathers trained yesterday in a setting more familiar to Capt Timothy Rodber of the Green Howards and England back row: the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in Berkshire. This is where officer cadets learn leadership, a subject in which Kevin Bowring, the Wales coach, would like to think his team have an advantage.

This has less to do with the fuss attending Will Carling's ascension, a subject which he does not help Rowell pick the team than with Bowring's faith in the attributes of his own man, Jonathan Humphreys. "Jonathan leads from the front," Bowring said. "He sets the perfect example in his physical commitment and determination. He really gets into the face

of the opposition, is keen to look them in the eye and is not prepared to go backwards. That is the sort of leadership the rest of the team responds to."

This is not simply a case of a coach saying predictably agreeable things about his captain -

though Rowell has been considerably less effusive about Carling. For Bowring, Humphreys personifies a revived Welsh attitude to England which, while recognising English achievements of recent years, no longer allows the exaggerated respect

that has led the past four Wales teams to step on to Twickenham already as good as beaten.

If that means a soupçon of spite, so be it. The Welsh may have made themselves obnoxious to Englishmen by the triumphalist manner of their support in the long-ago era of the 1970s but anyone who has observed what has occurred since then can hardly deny that a due sense of historical justice - or whatever - is a help rather than a hindrance. Just look at the Scots.

When it comes down to it, however, the ultimately decisive features will be less esoteric. Rowell expects the game to be won and lost at half-back - which means he cannot afterwards go on about his England team in transition because that is precisely what Wales, not least their half-backs, are too.

That said, the greater pressure is on England, if only because expectations have come to be so vertiginous during the Carling years. In reality England

were not that much better against Western Samoa than Wales against Italy, and English hopes of another Grand Slam have already disappeared after the defeat by France.

There are other extraneous matters that have not assisted. Professionalisation has been more lucrative for England than, say, Wales but has also been far more of a distraction. For Martin Johnson in this of all weeks to be offered £350,000 to move from Leicester for Northampton is enough to cause Rowell to despair.

There is some better news, though: Tony Underwood - an England player who has already left Leicester - is about to make his long-awaited reappearance for Newcastle after recovering from a knee injury which has absented him from rugby since the World Cup semi-final eight months ago.

His international return would give England extra incentive to play as they talk (fast and loose) even if their honour

demands they try to do so here and now after the mischievous mind game that has been played by Bowring. "We need to develop a pattern of play which is more expansive and exploits the speed and exciting runners we have in the back line. I hope England buy into that," the Wales coach said.

To which Rowell replied tartly: "Mr Bowring, who is just starting in international coaching, should look after the Welsh team and leave the English team to someone else." Then there is Carling. "It's very kind of him to invite us to do that but we will play the way we think it will take to beat Wales," he said. Whatever way that may be, he will probably - and had better - be right.

The International Board's ruling that players moving countries must serve a 180-day residency period before playing is illegal within the European Union, an EU official said yesterday.

A game for two halves; Scotland v France, page 20

ENGLAND v WALES			
M Catt	Bath	15 J Thomas	Llanelli
J Slegntholme	Bath	14 I Evans	Llanelli
W Carling	Harlequins, capt	13 N Davies	Neath
J Guscott	Bath	12 M Davies	Llanelli
R Underwood	Leicester	11 W Proctor	Llanelli
P Grayson	Northampton	10 A Thomas	Bristol
M Dawson	Northampton	9 R Howley	Bridgend
G Rowntree	Leicester	1 A Lewis	Cardiff
M Regan	Bristol	2 J Humphreys	Cardiff, capt
J Leonard	Harlequins	3 J Davies	Neath
M Johnson	Leicester	4 G O Llewellyn	Neath
M Bayfield	Northampton	5 D Jones	Cardiff
T Rodber	Northampton	6 Lewis	Cardiff
B Clarke	Bath	8 H Taylor	Cardiff
L Dallaglio	Wesps	7 G Jones	Llanelli

Replacements: 16 J Callard (Bath), 17 P de Grandville (Bath), 18 V Brown (Bath), 19 V Brown (Bath), 20 G Davis (Bath), 21 D Richards (Leicester).  
Referee: K McCartney (Scotland).  
Kick-off: 3.0 (BBC 1, BBC Wales)

## MOVING HOME: Yorkshire consider cricket pastures new as Derby pitch future football plans outside the Baseball Ground

## Tykes look to a life beyond Headingley

Yorkshire County Cricket Club have commissioned a study on the feasibility of leaving Headingley for a new stadium.

Dissatisfaction with limited car parking and sharing the complex with Leeds rugby league club have led to the decision. Reports claim the committee and chairman are leaning towards a move to a new home - thought to be a greenfield site near Wakefield - even though Yorkshire have an option to take control of their half of Headingley.

"We could possibly own Headingley because we are in

discussions with the rugby club to buy our half," Chris Hassell, Yorkshire's chief executive, said.

"If you could say in the summer the ground was ours and in the winter it was rugby's then it would be fine but with the Super League playing in the summer now it causes problems.

"Even if they were to give us the ground, the problem is that we would need to spend £10-£20m to bring it up to scratch - sometimes it is better to knock a house down and start again from scratch. If we moved to a new greenfield site with plenty of land, we could use land

as practice pitches for the community and utilise it as car parking space for Test matches."

If the feasibility study into a new base - expected to take three to six months - is positive, Hassell believes Yorkshire can provide a 25,000 capacity stadium which would rival Lord's. "I believe this is the way forward for us," he said. "I have been to Huddersfield and Middlesbrough's new [football] grounds and they all report bigger crowds because it is a family day out."

"We have to build a stadium with decent-sized seats and ample leg room so you can relax.

It would be an experience to come to a cricket match."

Hassell, who thinks the new ground could be in use in three to five years if there are no hitches, also plans shops, a museum and possible tours around the ground, including using the press box as a lecture theatre where they can bring down a screen and show a film on the history of Yorkshire.

"If everything went as I would want it, it would be a Test arena to rival Lord's for facilities - I'm sure people would flock to it if it was close to a motorway," he said.

## Rams ready for relocation

GUY HODGSON

In the centenary season of playing at the Baseball Ground, Derby County yesterday announced they are to relocate to a new 30,000 all-seater stadium on the edge of the city.

A statement said the First Division leaders had "agreed in principle" to moving to a new home which will be built on the lines of Middlesbrough's Riverside Stadium. They played their first match at the Baseball Ground on September 14, 1895.

The statement said: "Negotiations with Derby City Council and the site operators, Derby Pride, are at an advanced stage and the decision to quit the Baseball Ground will be made when all parties have approved the final agreement."

If they go it will be at the third time of asking. Derby have twice resisted attempts to lure them away from a venue, which, as the name suggests, once played host to America's national game and before that was rumoured to be an old gypsy encampment.

In 1923 the local council wanted them to share a 4,000-seater complex and after the Second World War another municipal scheme would have housed the club in a stadium designed by Maxwell Ayrton, an architect who had worked on Wembley Stadium. They declined, however, losing with the latter offer, the chance to join a project that would have given the club the most advanced ground in Europe.

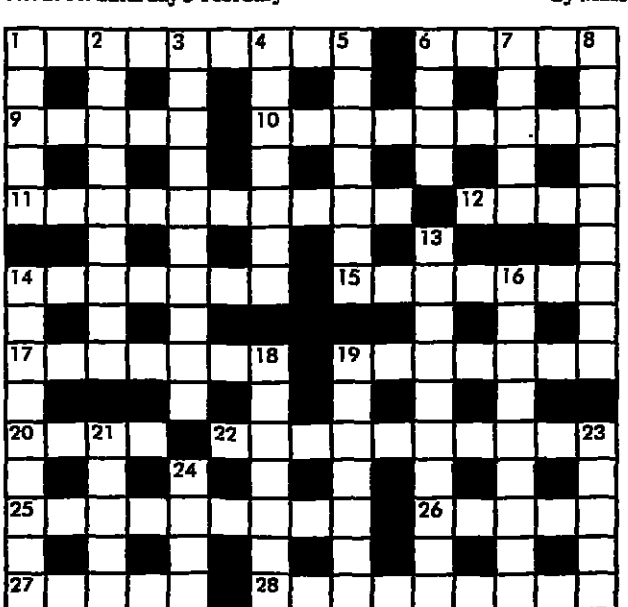
And the gypsies? Legend had it that a curse had been placed on the field and in 1946 a journalist paid some travellers to have it lifted. That year the club won the FA Cup.

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## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

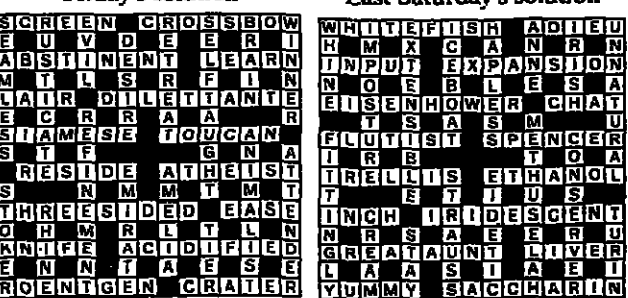
No. 2906, Saturday 3 February

By Maas



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



## ACROSS

- 1 Reprobate in C Stream, misbehaving (9)
- 2 Rock formation with hint of Silurian fault (5)
- 3 Act I included spot for Italian? (5)
- 4 He may well shake his head at court proceedings (9)
- 5 Mount and cram in vehicle (10)
- 6 Wagging in the vault (4)
- 7 Like a record time-breaking vehicle? (7)
- 8 Extraneous tip (7)
- 9 Rattle Greek underworld type with VAT? That's about right (7)
- 10 It's left by river - and tides, maybe, going out? (7)
- 11 Gunned up on American state (Eastern) (4)
- 12 One conversant with the signs of the times? (10)
- 13 Frightened to change if reared (9)
- 14 Fault One's kicked into touch? (5)
- 15 Beasts grazing quiet slopes (5)
- 16 Makes new plots with random seedings by river (9)

## DOWN

- 1 Money for a tot or two (5)
- 2 Those responsible for public exhibitions? (9)
- 3 Suez vendor's arranged a meeting (10)
- 4 Avoid arrest? Sailor's taken in, we hear (7)
- 5 React, squirming over the Gallic sentimentality (7)
- 6 Place with a view, it's said (4)
- 7 Stumble, making fellow drop change (5)
- 8 Manuscript revealing church and bishops in division? (9)
- 9 Specifies one with curtailed influence in America (10)
- 10 A road's wet, splattered with soft drink (4,5)
- 11 One's likely to wear anything, being thus (9)
- 12 More imperious one's rising in elaborate robes (7)
- 13 Ran down, free in action (7)
- 14 King taken in trick? That's off (5)
- 15 Around East you'll see rise of eminent figures (5)
- 16 Draws bonds (4)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive complimentary copies of the Larousse Dictionary of Literary Characters. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, E.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5SL. Please use the box number and postcode. Last week's winners: B P Barlow, Ipswich; Liz Nask, Winchester; Colin Maroney, Leicester; William Nicholas, London W6; Mr & Mrs R J Daly, Kilmordunshire.

## ITF given 14 days to reveal drug evidence

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS

A High Court judge has given the International Tennis Federation 14 days to prove it has evidence that Mats Wilander and Karel Novacek tested positive for cocaine at last year's French Open.

Neither player was present at yesterday's hearing, which followed allegations in a Sunday newspaper. The players took the ITF to court in an attempt to have the federation's drug-testing procedures declared unfair and to prove their innocence.

Philip Engelman, who represented Wilander and Novacek in court, told the judge, Sir Donald Rattue, it was the players' right under ITF rules to call for an appeals committee, and this was set up to be heard in London on 23 or 24 January. But, on the day before it was due to begin, the American lawyer for the ITF called off the hearing.

Engelman said lawyers representing the players in the United States had been trying unsuccessfully since November to obtain documents relating to the players' urine tests from the

French laboratories so that their expert witness could examine the procedures.

The judge gave the ITF 14 days to produce evidence and the players' legal team a further 14 days to reply. The ITF must also give the players 21 days' notice if the federation tries to reconstitute its own appeal hearing.

In a statement the ITF said: "In an effort to maintain the integrity of the Tennis Anti-Doping Programme and make today's judicial procedures unnecessary, the ITF provided first to the players' representatives, and then to the court, a commitment that no further proceedings under the programme related to these players would be taken until 21 days prior notice is given to the players and their representatives."

"The offer was not accepted by the players' representatives, who wanted to formally restrain the ITF from carrying out its Anti-Doping Programme. The judge regarded the ITF's commitment as being entirely satisfactory and attempts to obtain future relief from the ITF were therefore unsuccessful."

Seles beaten, page 23

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